

A leisurely dusk ride along Wenjin Jie is a history lesson in a city marking its 850th anniversary as capital.  
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There are many myths surrounding the origin of Shoushan stone.

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Dong had the good fortune to become one of the students of exiled Czech writer Milan Kundera, author of the *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.  
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# BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY OCTOBER 31 2003

NO. 127

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

## Quake Survivors Battle Low Temperatures



Students of Longshan Center Primary School study in an open-air classroom.

Xinhua photo

**A**t 7:10 pm Wednesday, 2,000 cotton-padded tents allocated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs arrived in the quake-hit city of Zhangye, in northwest China's Gansu Province.

The delivery is the largest batch of relief goods received so far in Zhangye, where survivors are battling freezing temperatures, said Liu Jianying, an official in charge of relief goods distribution.

Some 3,500 tents were sent to Minle and Shandan counties, the areas most severely hit by last Saturday's earthquakes, however a further 6,500 are still required, according to Liu.

Liu called for more donations from the whole of society to help local residents pass the coming winter safely.

Earthquakes measuring 6.1 and 5.8 on the Richter scale

shook areas between Minle and Shandan counties late Saturday, killing nine people and injuring 43.

With much of the relief material still on the way, survivors are living a hard life, especially at night, when temperatures have been falling to five or six degrees below zero. Cotton-padded tents are sorely needed, local officials said.

In the village of Yaozhai, Minle County, where no house was left undamaged by the quakes, people have had to spend the freezing nights sheltering in wheat stacks, or under tractors or barrows. Soldiers have helped local villagers build 40 makeshift shelters for children, the elderly and the ill.

According to the Zhangye City government, the twin quakes affected 46,491 households, destroyed 14,322 houses and caused damage to 45,950

houses in two counties.

All the injured have been hospitalized and are now receiving treatment in local hospitals. More medical workers have been sent to the disaster areas to help treat the injured and those who fall sick.

Zhang Zhengqian, a senior official in Zhangye, said the city government had allocated 6,000 cases of 537 kinds of medicines, valued at 1.68 million yuan to the affected areas. "The medicine we have received is sufficient," he said.

Meanwhile, most schools in the quake-hit areas resumed operation Wednesday.

"Except for 30 schools that were seriously damaged, the rest of the schools in Minle have reopened, accounting for 80 percent of the total," said Wang Xueshun, deputy director of Minle's cultural, educational and sports bureau.

"But some students are attending classes held in tents and some even in the open air," said Wang.

In Shandan County, 25 primary and middle schools reopened Wednesday, but students at another 26 schools had to remain at home.

"Even the reopened schools are facing great challenges as winter approaches," said Li Jicheng, deputy director of Shandan's cultural, educational and sports bureau.

The governments of the two counties are setting up more tents and transferring students whose schools could not resume operation in the short term to other schools.

All schools in Minle and Shandan are expected to resume operation before November 7, according to local officials.

(Sources: Xinhua)

## Italy Donates 16.4 Million Euros to Reduce Beijing Traffic Pollution

By Hou Mingxin

**F**our environmentally friendly bus engines have arrived in Beijing from Italy. The shipment, the first of a series, is the result of an agreement signed in May by a delegation representing the Italian Ministry of Environment and Territory and the Beijing Municipal Government.

The delegation, led by Adolfo Urso, vice minister of Production Activities, visited Beijing during the SARS outbreak.

According to the agreement, the two sides agree to reinforce cooperation in the field of environmental protection. The Italian Ministry of Environment and Territory is providing 15 million euros to Beijing, for use mainly in the purchase of 300 sets of super low emission CNG bus engines, establishing light vehicle emission test laboratories, set up a pilot intelligent transportation system and a traffic environmental air pollu-

tion monitoring and control system, and construct solid waste treatment facilities.

The program constitutes a key program between the Italian ministry and Beijing under the framework of a cooperation agreement that began in 2000. The main purpose of the program is to reduce vehicle emission pollution and improve air quality.

In mid-October, at the invitation of the Italian ministry, a delegation headed by Vice Mayor Liu Zhihua visited Italy. During the trip, the Italian side agreed to provide a supplemental 1.4 million euros to Beijing, which will be used to purchase catalyst converters for the 300 engines.

So far, the Italian government has provided a total of 16.4 million euros for Beijing's environmental protection. The two sides have also agreed to carry out further cooperation in the area of environmental monitoring and environmental protection facilities.

## Keeping the Wall Great

By Hou Mingxin

Built 2,000 years ago to keep out Mongolian marauders and Manchu militias, the Great Wall of China now faces a more modern threat. And this time, it is from the inside. While the elements continue to wear down this ancient defense little by little, the greatest cause of damage today is the relentless encroachment of civilization.

In an effort to prevent a famous section of the Great Wall from being ruined, Ma Jinkui,

a farmer in Hebei province, has devoted himself to its protection since the 1960s. He has even organized a conservation group to safeguard the wall and its spectacular vistas.

**A historical monument**

Qianxi is a small mountainous county under Tangshan Municipal City in Hebei province. Across the north of the county runs the Xifengkou section of the Great Wall.

(Continued on page 2)



Ma Jinkui points to a damaged section of a guard tower on the Great Wall.

Photo by Hou Mingxin

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# Financial Industry Confident of Rapid Growth

By Zhao Hongyi

China should introduce institutional investors, social welfare pensions and medical care pensions to the stock market, according to Zhou Zhengqing, vice chairman of the Financial and Economic Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC). Zhou, former chairman of the China

Securities Regulatory Commission, made the remarks at the opening session of 2003 International Finance Forum held in Beijing from October 28 to 30.

Cheng Siwei, vice chairman of the standing committee of the NPC expressed similar views. "China expects to increase its GDP from last year's \$1.1 trillion to \$4 trillion by 2020. An open and dynamic

financial market will contribute to the growth," Cheng told the forum.

Speakers at the forum agree that in a globalizing world economy, financial markets can no longer be isolated.

Regarding potential risks, there has been a general consensus that strongly developing industry, alert supervision and effective macro financial adjustment tools are the best ways to safeguard the market.

Cheng suggested that, to ease the pressure for a revaluation of the Renminbi, China might open the door wider to institutions and enterprises to purchase foreign currencies for trans-border payments. "But a revaluation at this time is unrealistic," he emphasized.

Michael Kantor, former US trade representative and secretary of commerce shared Cheng's view, saying, "a revaluation is not in the interests of China, Asia and the world."

Kantor predicted that agricultural market and intellectual property rights

will be the two most hotly debated issues between the two countries.

Other prominent speakers at the forum also include Wu Xiaoping, vice chairman of China Insurance Regulatory Commission, who introduced China's rapidly growing and opening up insurance industry.

Robert Mundell, the Nobel economic laureate, analyzed the position of China and its currency in the globalizing world economy.

Richard Blum, chairman of Newbridge Capital Group, spoke on "international capital flows and the opportunities and challenges faced by China".

Organized by China Reform and Development Committee, a think tank of the State Council, the three days forum invited guests, officials, financial professionals and academic researchers from around the world to discuss the problems, prospects and reforms that need to be implemented in China's financial industry.

## Investment Invited for City Underground Construction

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing is inviting investment from overseas and domestic non-government companies for the construction of two underground rail projects. Deputy director general of Beijing Metro Construction Group, Wang Hao, made the statement while introducing business opportunities to a Hong Kong business delegation on October 23.

A Public-Private-Partnership formula will be used to attract investment for the No. 4 and No. 10 lines, according to Wang. The government will take responsibility for the construction of tunnels, stations and platforms. The rest, including trains and signal systems, as well as the operation and maintenance of equipment, is open to interested investors.

The 28-kilometer No. 4 line, with a total estimated cost of 14.8 billion yuan, and the 33-kilometer No. 10 line (15 billion yuan), are not the only rail projects available to investors.

Beijing plans to build 22 new rail transportation lines in order to improve its urban transportation capacity in the coming ten years, according to Peng Zerui, general manager of the group. The 22 lines include 15 underground lines, 7 light rail lines and 10 rail lines.

Aside from the existing two metro lines already in operation in the downtown area, the Nos. 4, 5, 8 and 10 lines are currently under construction. Preparation work for construction of the Nos. 9 and 13 lines began earlier this month. The seven other underground lines are still in design, but will be announced soon, said Wang.

## Simultaneous Translation Used at State Council Press Conferences

By Zhang Zhan

Since last Thursday, simultaneous translation has been adopted at press conferences of the State Council's news office.

According to Yang Yang, deputy director of the office, the new system is intended to save time. "In the past, press conferences ran for up to 45 minutes, and many reporters had no chance to raise questions" Yang said.

During question time, the press conferences will still use one English sentence - one Chinese sentence model, Yang said.

Simultaneous translation requires the spokesperson to be able to respond quickly and have a high language skill. Since the system is still developing, it is not yet appropriate to change the translation mode during question time, but this is just a question of time, Yang said.

According to Yang, the reform has been welcomed by reporters, because it improves efficiency and allows more time for questions.

## First Foreign Investor Approved in Private Bank

By Hou Mingxin

The China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) has approved the sale of a 1.6 percent stake in Minsheng Bank, China's sole private lender, to International Finance Corp (IFC). This is the first time foreign investors have been allowed to enter the country's private banking sector, *Beijing Morning Post* reported last Wednesday.

The entry of the World Bank's private sector financing firm is expected to help Minsheng attract more strategic investors and boost its \$1 billion overseas IPO plan next year.

IFC has acquired stakes in several Chinese banks, including the Bank of Shanghai, saying it hopes to bring the country's creaky financial sector up to international standards.

Minsheng has announced its intention to go listed in Hong Kong or New York in the first half of 2004, joining a number of banks eager to expand capital and services in a freer market since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001.

## Duty-free Zone Planned for CEPA Goods

Beijing is to set up a special zone for the trading of more than 270 varieties of goods manufactured in Hong Kong next year.

These Hong Kong products will come into the zone at zero customs duty under the Mainland Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), which takes effect on January 1, 2004.

This means that local residents will be able to buy Hong Kong goods at cheaper prices, according to acting magistrate Chen Gang of Chaoyang District, where the zone is to be located.

The CEPA zone will provide Hong Kong businesses with more opportunities, Chen said. (Xinhua)

# Fund Injection for Big Four Banks

The central government is considering another capital infusion program for the big four state-owned banks, which are laden heavily with mounting bad loans.

China has plans to enlarge the capital bases of the big four banks, which dominate 60 to 70 percent of the domestic banking industry, by pouring fresh capital into them, Li Ruogu, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), told the 2003 International Finance Forum in Beijing Tuesday.

"The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio in the big four banks is a little high, though the lenders have made some progress in disposing of these bad

loans," said Li.

The average NPL ratio in the four banks, namely the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the Bank of China, China Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank of China, stood at 22.19 percent at the end of June, down 4.02 percent from the beginning of this year, according to the China Banking Regulatory Commission.

Li did not reveal how much or when the government planned to inject into the four banks. But it will not be the first time that the central government has given them direct financial support. The four banks are required by the central bank to cut their NPL ratio to below 15 percent by 2006.

The PBOC transferred 1.39 trillion yuan (US \$167.94 billion) worth of bad assets to four asset management firms in 1999.

"The NPL problem in China is getting better," said Michael Kantor, former US trade representative and commerce secretary, at the forum.

Meanwhile, the central bank has asked the nation's lenders to be cautious about the potential negative impact generated from excessive lending in the past few months.

The outstanding value of lending in domestic financial institutions reached 16.7 trillion yuan at the end of September, a rise of 2.7 trillion yuan from the beginning of this year, said the PBOC.

"Despite dealing with these NPLs, Chinese banks should build up internal risk control capabilities to ward off risks of new NPLs from extending new loans," said Jeffrey R. Shafer, vice chairman of Citigroup Global Markets International Investment Banking.

In addition, financial executives attending the forum called on Chinese lenders to enhance their efficiency and be more transparent to the public.

The average profit that each mainland banking staff yielded last year was less than 100,000 yuan, compared with HK \$1.8 million (US \$232,039) by Hang Seng Bank employees in Hong Kong, according to a government official. (Xinhua)

## Hong Kong to Set Up CEPA Partnership Centers

By Hou Mingxin

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council plans to set up four partnership centers in early 2004 under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) signed between Hong Kong and China's central government.

Michael Sze Cho-cheung, president of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, announced the plan last Thursday at the Seventh Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium in Beijing.

The four centers will be established in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong and will offer CEPA information as well as business services in Hong Kong, and help establish partnership relations between

business people in Hong Kong and the mainland.

The council will also establish CEPA business lines, which could also be used by enterprises on the mainland, and offer free hotlines to provide business information, he said.

At the end of the year, the council will launch seven service websites to help enterprises in Hong Kong and the mainland grasp business opportunities under the framework of CEPA, he added.

He expressed the belief that CEPA will have greater significance in promoting cooperation between Hong Kong and the Pearl River economic zone and the Yangtze River economic zone as well as the Bohai Bay region.

## Tourism Cooperation to be Strengthened with Hong Kong

By Hou Mingxin

Beijing and Hong Kong have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the tourism industry, tourism authorities announced Thursday last week at the Seventh Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium in Beijing.

The cooperation will come under framework of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) signed between Hong Kong and the central government in January.

Selina Chow Liang Shuk-ye, Chairwoman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), said the cooperation would pro-

vide more opportunities for the two cities. She also announced that HKTB's new global tourism promotion would be launched in Beijing.

Wen Ziji, deputy director of the Beijing Tourism Bureau, said at the symposium that the bureau will print pamphlets and maps introducing Hong Kong tourism sites by the end of the year. These will be distributed free to Beijingers to encourage more people to visit Hong Kong.

Wen also said that the city will continue to support Hong Kong-based companies to set up hotels and joint travel agencies in Beijing.

## China and US to Reinforce Cooperation on Textiles

By Hou Mingxin

US Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans met with representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and the textile and apparel industry during a four day visit to China that wound up Wednesday.

In discussions on bilateral trade in the textile and apparel sectors, the two sides agreed on the need to increase dialogue and make progress in resolving problems. To this end, several specific steps have been agreed on. These steps include the establishment of a bilateral textile consultation mechanism; the promotion of industry-to-industry

exchange to seek opportunities for bilateral cooperation; organizing an exhibition to promote the further development of US exports of textile products to China.

In addition, the Ministry of Commerce will encourage the Chinese textile and apparel association to enhance coordination to insure order in the bilateral textile and apparel trade. The ministry also affirmed that China will continue its policy of opening and reform and welcomes foreign enterprises to participate in the restructuring of the Chinese textile and apparel industry.

(Continued from page 1)

In 1568, Qi Jiguang, a famous general of the Ming Dynasty, established a garrison at Xifengkou as a defence against the marauding Manchu. Qi rebuilt the Xifengkou Great Wall, which was originally built during the Warring States period (770- 221 BC) by the Kingdom of Yan.

In March 1933, it was at Xifengkou that the Kuomintang 29th Army, under the commanded of General Song Zheyuan, won a decisive victory against the invading Japanese army.

Today, Xifengkou Great Wall faces the same threats as most other sections of the wall. Visitors throw garbage over the battlements and carve their names into the bricks. Villagers cart away pieces of stone to build houses and sheep enclosures, while developers lease land at the wall's base to build gas stations and other unsightly structures.

**An old man's story**

Ma Jinkui has lived all his life in Chengwaihumin, a village near the Xifengkou Great Wall. His ancestor, a laborer from Shandong, settled here during the Ming Dynasty when general Qi Jiguang was rebuilding the wall. For 61-year-old Ma, Xifengkou represents not only home and childhood memories, but also the heritage of his ancestor. He says for this reason, he can not allow the wall to be damaged.

Ma began actively protecting the wall during the Cultural Revolution. In the spring of 1967, a team of college students came to Xifengkou for military training. Some of the students removed and destroyed the bricks of the wall.

Confronting the vandals, Ma first bowed to them and then beseeched them to stop damaging the wall. The students told Ma that the Great Wall was part of the "Old World" and should not exist in New China. "But it is also our ancestors' heritage!" he responded.

"Although I did not stop all of the students, some, at least, heeded me," he told *Beijing Today*.

In 1978, construction began on the Panjiakou Reservoir. According to the plan, Ma's village and part of the Xifengkou Wall would be flooded, and the villagers were required to move to other counties. Ma, however, refused the order.

"I was born in and grow at Xifengkou. If I leave, who will take care of the wall?" said Ma. Eventually, he moved his house to a higher spot on the mountain.

As a result of his efforts to protect the wall, Ma and his family have on occasions been threatened with physical violence. One day in 1980, Ma heard that a man named Du from a village in neighboring Kuancheng county had carried off three large slabs of stone from a guard tower.

Ma says he and his son, Ma Haijun, walked to the village and asked him to return them. Du refused, saying they were not Ma's property, and his son threatened the two with a gun. "I told them the stone slabs didn't belong to me, but they did belong to the country. And that was a matter of conscience."

Later, Ma went to Kancheng police station to report the incident, but the director of the police station told him not to concern himself about such matters and said that Du had not broken the law.

"At that time, few people had a sense of protecting the Great Wall. Nor was there any law protecting the wall," he said. According to Ma, Du still has the stone slabs.

The following year, the wall of Ma's fishpond was breached, and 5,000-yuan worth of young fish were released. For an ordinary farmer like Ma, this was a huge loss. He believes the act of vandalism was deliberate.

Despite such misfortunes, however, Ma still maintains a watchful eye on the Great Wall. In 1998, a tombstone was removed from the foot of the mountain by a farmer from a neighboring village. When Ma heard about it, he went to retrieve the relic.

"The tombstone marked the grave of four senior Japanese military officers who died during the battle

against General Song Zheyuan's Kuomintang 29th Army in March 1933," Ma told *Beijing Today*.

"It's strong evidence of Japan's invasion of China. If they did not invade us, why did they bury their officers on our land?" he added.

**Volunteer protectors**

In December 2000, a group was set up at Ma's suggestion to protect the Xifengkou Great Wall. The group now boasts of around 200 volunteers, most of them farmers from villages along the wall.

The goal of the group is to prevent people from doing damage to the wall, pick up garbage, and urge people not to litter.

Zhou Dongjun, a farmer form Ma's village, is a member of the group. "Some people do not understand Ma's actions, some even think he is crazy," Zhou told *Beijing Today*.

"I understand him though. In fact, for us local people, the wall represents not only our forefathers' heritage, it is also something of great value to us," he said.

According to Zhou, nowadays, more and more tourists come to the Xifengkou Great Wall, which has brought his family a new source of income.

"Now, fewer people dare to vandalize or destroy the wall," said Hong Dekui, a farmer from a neighboring village, and another member of the volunteer group.

The reason for this is two-fold, according to Hong. On the one hand, the government has strengthened measures to protect the wall, on the other hand, more and more people realize the importance of protecting the wall.

"The Great Wall should be kept clean. Each time I come here, I pick up some garbage," said Chen Yubin, a visitor form Beijing.

Chen expressed his admiration for Ma's efforts. He also agreed that greater efforts are needed to preserve the wall and its surrounding areas.

"After I die, it will be up to my son to protect the wall, when my son dies, it will be the turn of my grandchildren," Ma said.



# Ding Lei Tops Forbes List of China's Richest



Ding Lei, \$1.076 billion



Rong Zhijian, \$934 million



Xu Rongmao, \$800 million



Lu Guanqiu, \$687 million



Liu Yonghao, \$550 million

By James Liu

Internet entrepreneur Ding Lei, or William Ding, founder of the Nasdaq-listed Chinese Internet portal NetEase, topped *Forbes Global* magazine's new list of China's richest people with \$1.076 billion of personal assets.

Tim Ferguson, *Forbes Global* editor, and Russell Flannery, *Forbes Global* Shanghai bureau chief held a press conference for the release of the magazine's 2003 China rich list in the Ruoy Chai Intentional Building Thursday in Beijing.

The new list was compiled by an international team led by Flannery, who has worked in China for more than a dozen years. Compared to the 2002 edition, this year's list has

35 new entrants and is led by figures from the technology, manufacturing and real estate fields.

*Forbes'* list differs greatly from that compiled by Rupert Hoogewerf and *Euromoney* magazine released half a month ago in terms of the number of newly selected people, total personal asset assessments and rankings. While the top four slots are the same on both lists, the rankings completely diverge from there.

Ma Huateng, founder of Tencent Technology Ltd., provider of the popular QQ instant messaging service, ranked No. 99 on the *Forbes* list with \$100 million in personal assets but does not appear on Hoogewerf's list.

Regarding the large number of new entrants on the list, Flannery told *Beijing Today* that such turnover is not surprising, as around 10 to 15 percent of the people on the US list disappear each year. "Such change is basically a good thing," he added.

At the press conference, *Forbes China* announced it would launch a "China Celebrity List" in its February 2004 edition. "The candidates for the listing will be well-known figures born in the Chinese mainland and that have made outstanding achievements in entertainment, sports, culture and media in 2003, such as Yao Ming, Gong Li and Zhang Ziyi," said *Forbes China's* publisher Ken Shi.



Chen Tianqiao, \$490 million



Liu Yongxing, \$480 million



Ye Lipai, \$421 million



Guo Guangchang, \$374 million



Chen Lihua, \$361 million

## Is Hoogewerf's List a Curse on Tycoons?

By James Liu

Since the "China Rich List" put together by Briton Rupert Hoogewerf debuted in 1999, being listed has become a somewhat dubious honor. Scores of people named in each year's rankings of the 100 wealthiest people in this country fail to show up on the next, in many cases due to legal troubles. Around China, it is commonly joked that the list ends up as a blacklist of possible criminals and targets of interest to taxation authorities and governmental investigative bodies, and many wealthy people actively maneuver to stay out of its rankings.

Events since the release of this year's list by Hoogewerf and the magazine *Euromoney* on October 16 have only added weight to such

claims. Ding Lei, the 32-year-old chairman of NetEase.com, was listed as No. 1, but saw his fate take a turn for the worse the same day the list came out when his company's stock on the Nasdaq market dropped \$4 to \$64.14. That dip spelled a 590 million yuan loss for Ding, significantly closing the gap between him and No. 2 Rong Zhijian, or Larry Yung, CEO and owner of CITIC Pacific Group.

Next to suffer from the "rich list curse" was Liu Han, ranked 61 with 1.2 billion yuan of personal assets, who was rumored to have been involved in improper futures transactions. On October 20, his company, Sichuan Hongda Chemical Industry Co., announced 10 million shares of legal person stock of Pingyuan Industrial Develop-

ment Co., its second largest subsidiary, had been frozen until October 15, 2004, or for one year, by decision of the Supreme People's Court of Sichuan Province.

Although subsequent investigations uncovered no evidence of impropriety on the part of Liu or his company, the domestic media still pounced on the news. Three major news portal websites, Sina, Sohu, and Netease, covered the case under the same headline, "Will This Trigger a New Round of Decline of the Rich?"

The freeze on the Pingyuan stock has yet to be lifted.

Other victims of the "rich list curse" include famed actress Liu Xiaoqing, who was first ranked in 1999, but fell out when she was arrested for tax evasion in 2002.

## Court Settles Lacoste's Fake Croc Case

By Zhao Hongyi

French clothing maker Lacoste, famed for its trademarked crocodile symbol, finally accepted the arbitration of the Beijing High People's Court last Thursday, ending the trademark violation suit it filed five years ago against the Hong Kong-based brand Crocodile. The two sides agreed to cooperate in countering the tide of counterfeit brand-name clothing made in the Chinese mainland.

Lacoste was established in 1933 and the company registered a trademark for its crocodile image in China in 1980.

First registered in Hong Kong in 1910 by a German businessman, the Crocodile brand has been run by several owners over the years. In 1987, Lim Por-yen, chairman of the Hong Kong-based Lai Sun Group, purchased the label and has since built it into a world famous brand.

According to the settlement agreement, Crocodile will use a new label



Bernard Lacoste (left) and Lim Por-yen (second from right) settled their differences in Beijing.

of a crocodile facing to the left, while Lacoste's crocodile faces right, after March 31, 2006.

However, Lacoste is far from winning its overall battle to protect its brand in this country. The French company has filed another case in Beijing against

the Singapore-based Crocodile brand, demanding that company halt use of its crocodile image and Chinese brand name, which Lacoste claims to have also registered. A number of local department stores and garment producers are listed as co-defendants in the case.

## Kodak Buys Stake in Lucky to Solidify Market Dominance

By Zhao Hongyi

The signing of a 20-year cooperation agreement between Eastman Kodak and Lucky Film on October 22 gave the multinational photography giant a 20 percent stake in China's top domestic film producer.

According to the agreement, Kodak will provide three compensation payments for the acquisition. This first payment of \$45 million in cash and the provision of an emulsion production line and related technologies is scheduled to be made early next year. The second transaction will include \$29.5 million and the free transfer of technologies for the upgrading of Lucky's two film paper production lines, while the third round of compensation will consist of \$25 mil-

lion and an emulsion and coating production line.

Over the past decade, Lucky Film has rebuffed several previous acquisition offers from Kodak and Fuji. However, as a means of improving its technologies in order to make higher-quality products, the company chose to go with Kodak "because Kodak provided better conditions," according to Zhang Gu, spokesman for the Baoding, Hebei Province-based film producer.

The company has been successful in selling its film around China, normally at prices one-third cheaper than those of similar Kodak and Fuji products.

Kodak operates a wholly-owned film production line in Xiamen, Fujian Province and has attained 60 percent mar-

ket share, due in no small part to its 8,600 licensed film developing chain stores around the country.

Fuji, Kodak's rival in China, has a 20 percent market share and 3,000 chain stores.

In 1998, Fuji built a digital camera factory in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province and has since become the leading supplier of digital cameras in China.

Lucky, on the other hand, seems determined to stick to production of film, photopaper and related products. "There will always be lots of demand for paper and emulsion as long as people want to develop their photos. At the same time, we will turn our focus to the development of digital pictures," said Zhang Gu.

## Avon Opening Outlets in China Post Offices

By Zhao Hongyi

Avon (China) Co. opened the first of a new series of sales outlets in Beijing on October 23, not in a department store but in one of the 280 post offices in the capital.

The US-based cosmetics manufacturer and retailer entered the China market in 1990 and has since posted consistent increases in annual sales and profits. Last year, Avon's total sales volume in China reached 1.2 billion yuan, in part thanks to its partnership with China Post, which provided logistics services.

By taking advantage of China Post's extensive distribution channels, Avon has set up nine logistics centers in major cities throughout this country and now delivers products to 1,600 franchised sales counters in department stores all around China.

China Posts takes care of product transportation, storage, dispatch and delivery, as well as handling returned goods and collecting payment.

The partnership is one of the ways in which China Post is striving to diversify its business in order to generate new profits, as the postal delivery sector, over which it used to hold a complete monopoly, has become very competitive with the opening of many express delivery business. Moreover, central government subsidies are waning. Earlier this month, Beijing Post followed similar moves by other regional postal services in beginning sales of life insurance products through its outlets in hopes of generating significant new revenue.

At a ceremony to mark the launching of the partnership held in Beijing last Friday, Avon CEO Andrea Jung promised to increase the number of chain outlets in China Post offices, but declined to give exact figures, saying "it all depends on the success to come". She added that her company expects to begin direct sales of its products in this country in the future.

Five years ago, the Chinese government banned direct sales, Avon's traditional retail method, but under the conditions of China's agreements to enter the World Trade Organization that ban will be lifted by 2005.

## Australian Minister Welcomes Chinese Tourists

By Zhao Hongyi

Australian Tourism Minister Joe Hockey came to China this week to promote his country as an outstanding travel destination.

In Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, Hockey met with representatives from travel agencies, airlines and governmental organizations of both countries to discuss how to improve travel coordination and facilitation, including plans to increase flights between China and Australia, running training programs for travel agents and guides and holding policy dialogues.

In 2002, 190,000 Chinese visited Australia and 140,000 Australians came to China. China has become Australia's sixth-largest source of tourists, and Jockey expressed expectations that the number of Chinese tourists heading to his country could reach one million per year by 2013.

## "Father of Euro" Lauded in Beijing

By Zhao Hongyi

Over 200 officials, researchers and academicians gathered to celebrate the publishing of the Chinese version of the selected works of Robert A. Mundel, the "father of the Euro" and Nobel Prize for Economics winner, at a ceremony held Thursday in the Great Hall of People in Beijing.

The professor's theories have been widely praised by the Chinese government, particularly his analysis of the increasing importance of the finance industry to the global economy. At the event, People's Bank of China Vice President Li Ruogu said, "his contributions are valuable to our construction of a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics."

## FedEx to Bolster Business in China

By Su Wei

FedEx Express announced plans to set up an independent China office in Shanghai through a public statement issued on October 24 in Beijing.

Since entering the China market in 1984, FedEx has expanded its service to 220 cities and the company's plans call for increasing that number by 100 cities over the next five years.

The new China office is scheduled to begin operations on December 1 this year.

## GE Launches Shanghai Research Center

General Electric opened its new China Technology Center in Shanghai on October 24. The center will serve as a platform for conducting advanced research and development of enabling technologies for future GE products and services, providing engineering support for GE's sourcing activities in China, and providing education for the corporation's employees, customers and suppliers.

In a subsequent press release, GE announced that the center would be pivotal to the realization of its objectives of \$5 billion in sales and \$5 billion in procurement in China by 2005. (PR Newswire)

## Netease.com Posts Moderate Profit Growth

By Zhao Hongyi

Netease.com, one of the three leading Chinese portal websites listed on the US' Nasdaq stock market, claimed to have earned 146 million yuan (\$17.7 million) in operational revenues and profits of 87.1 million yuan (\$10.5 million) in the third quarter of this year in its quarterly report released Wednesday.

Of its three major income-earning products, online games and commercial ads showed strong growth, while wireless communication products such as short message services (SMS) were relatively stagnant.

The portal is promoting new products on its website, including the instant communication tool popo.163.com, a pop music club, mtv.163.com, the job.163.com job bulletin, a business news station, biz.163.com, and the shopping club buy.163.com. The purpose of pushing so many new products, according to Ted Sun, Netease's CEO, is to cultivate and expand the company's pool of loyal users and potential customers.



# Kremlin Sticks to Hard Line



Russia's richest man, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, owner of Russia's first private oil producer, Yukos  
AFP Photo

Moscow, October 28 (AFP) - The Moscow stock market bounced back after suffering its worst loss of Vladimir Putin's presidency as the government vowed to make sure that a scandal surrounding the arrest of Russia's richest man would not ruin the economy.

Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov admitted that "some market tensions" followed the weekend arrest on fraud charges of Yukos oil chief and leading opposition tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

The stock market responded Monday by plunging 10 percent - one of its biggest losses since the August 1998 economic crisis that threatened the very

future of Russia's post-Soviet revival.

Kasyanov appealed for calm Tuesday and urged the government "to take all the necessary measures needed for stabilizing and reviving the market."

Russia's main RTS index ended the day up 4.9 percent, with the market heavyweight Yukos gaining 4.4 percent after losing 15.4 percent and five billion dollars (4.3 billion euros) of its stock market value on Monday.

But there was more bad news for Russia's number one oil producer when a court ruled that major Yukos shareholder Platon Lebedev - whose July 2 arrest rang the opening bell in the company's standoff with the Kremlin - would remain behind bars until year-end pending a criminal investigation into his business dealings.

Meanwhile most analysts focused on Putin's first reaction to the standoff on Monday and attempted to predict how his tough line would affect this year's parliamentary election campaign and future investments in Russia.

"Irrespective of how many billions of dollars are in his personal and corporate accounts, everyone has to be equal before the law," Putin said of Khodor-

kovsky's arrest.

Analysts observed that most businessmen who made their money in the shadowy privatization deals of the 1990s could be hauled in to court but that Khodorkovsky was selected because he was becoming too powerful and openly financing opposition parties ahead of the December 7 parliamentary poll.

"Far from equality before the law, we are of course witnessing manipulated law enforcement for political ends," said Christopher Granville of the brokerage United Financial Group in a research note.

## Comment:

*Like many other tycoons in Russia, Mr. Khodorkovsky has political ambitions. He is providing funds to the left wing political forces that oppose Putin's government. Local reports say the young tycoon aspires to the position of prime minister and even president.*

*Yukos has started negotiations with western oil companies like Mobil for the sale of its shares. Oil and natural gas are vital to Russia's national economy, so Moscow is sending a warning to the*

*western oil giants with interests in the country.*

*Russia's parliament is also facing elections. The class of wealthy young entrepreneurs are hated around the country by many voters. Moscow hopes it can win popularity by arresting Mikhail Khodorkovsky.*

— Xinhua News Agency, October 30, 2003

*ChinaPetro purchased a 65 percent share in the North Buzachi oilfields in Kazakhstan from ChevronTexaco this month. Earlier this year, ChinaPetro purchased the other 35 percent from Nimir Petroleum, a Saudi Arabian oil company.*

*As China is looking for a diversified oil resource, this provides China with strong support. This is needed, as the Siberia-Daqing oil line negotiated with Yukos is now in a somewhat uncertain situation because of the arrest of Mr. Khodorkovsky.*

*Central Asia has huge oil and natural gas deposits, and could be another oil source for China.*

— 21st Century Economic Reports, October 29, 2003



Traders react and place orders in the Euro Dollar pit at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange after Federal Reserve officials announced they would keep US interest rates at 1958 lows, October 28. The FED also said they expected to hold credit costs down for a considerable period of time, to keep the rate of inflation from becoming undesirably low.

Reuters Photo

## US Insurance Losses Understated

New York, October 26 (Moody's Investors Services) - US life insurance companies have sustained and continue to sustain heavy losses as a result of the current adverse credit environment.

The industry's elevated level of credit losses was an important factor in Moody's decision to change the US life insurance industry's rating outlook to negative from stable. Over the past year, Moody's has taken further rating actions on an extensive group of companies in the industry. Although it is improving, Moody's believes that the credit situation continues to be problematic for sectors of the industry.

Moody's estimate that the dollar amount of gross credit losses the US life insurance industry suffered was \$15.4 billion in 2002, rising from \$8.9 billion in 2001.

Both of these gross credit loss figures are far in excess of what the industry had incurred for years prior to 2001. The extraordinarily high levels of losses for 2002 are, in fact, unprecedented.

Moody's believes insurers have minimized the reported financial effects of credit losses by offsetting them with hinterest rate related and other types of realized gains. Many of these interest rate related gains were realized by insurers primarily for "window dressing" purposes so as to improve their reported net incomes.

## Analyst's Take:

*Insurance companies worldwide invest the premiums collected in stock markets, real estate, state and corporate bonds, infrastructure, deposits in commercial banks, or use the money for inter-corporation lending.*

*The performance of the stock markets around the world has not been ideal for investment.*

*Bonds and preferred shares are safe investment targets because of their fixed, though low, rates.*

*In China, insurance companies can invest their money in stock markets, bonds, short-term inter-corporation lending and deposits in banks.*

*The China Insurance Regulatory Commission is very sensitive to investment in stock markets, real estates and infrastructure, because the stock markets are fragile, real estate can easily produce bubbles, and infrastructure requires long term investment.*

*That does not mean insurance companies cannot invest in the stock market.*

*On average, they put 10-15 percent of their available capital into the domestic stock markets (they are not yet allowed to invest in stock markets abroad), but have seen great losses in the past several years, due to the poor performance of the market at home.*

— Tuo Guozhu, professor, school of finance, Capital University of Economics and Business

## WTO Reform Gears Up



Supachai Panitchpakdi, director general of the World Trade Organization  
AFP Photo

Geneva, October 23 (AFP) - Plans under discussion to reform the World Trade Organization should be kept separate from the current round of trade liberalization talks, WTO chief Supachai Panitchpakdi said.

"We need to be looking at the decision making system but we should not be doing that within the round," the director general told AFP in an interview.

After the collapse of a WTO ministerial meeting in Mexico last month, a frustrated European Union called the global trade body "medieval" because member states must make all decisions by consensus.

Brussels is already tossing around several ideas on how to change its structure.

And Supachai also appeared keen to encourage an evolution within the corridors of the giant trade organ.

In June he asked one of his predeces-

sors, Peter Sutherland, to head a "consultative council" charged with compiling a report on reforming the WTO's operations.

The report should be published next year, but the director general said the committee would likely discuss the issue with WTO members possibly at a general council meeting in December.

## Analyst's Take:

*Discussions on reform of the WTO have gone on for the last decade. The hottest issues include the following:*

*Difficulties in decision-making: with the current mechanism, an agreement cannot be reached unless all members express their approval. This is too hard to achieve.*

*Transparency: proposals and decision-making are, in most cases, made by a group of members, particularly the more developed countries. It is unfair, as it results in an imbalance of influence.*

*Ultimate target: the WTO was set up to pursue free trade. But today, with developing countries entering the organization, the WTO has to reconsider its ultimate target, because what the developing countries are pursuing primarily is development, not free trade. In addition, in the developed countries, free trade has met with opposition from people who blame it for huge imports and local unemployment.*

*Reform of the WTO will be a lengthy process, involving bargaining between the developed and less developed members.*

— Chen Dawei, senior consultant, Beijing WTO Affairs Office

## Ukraine Considers Oil Future

Kiev, October 23 (Dow Jones) - ChevronTexaco Corp. and Ukraine will hold a crucial round of talks this week in London seeking a deal to begin supplies of Caspian Sea crude to Europe via a Ukrainian oil pipeline, an official said on Monday.

ChevronTexaco, the biggest single shipper of oil from Kazakhstan, is looking to use the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline to move its crude to oil refineries in central Europe, bypassing the Bosphorus straits, officials said.

The development may undermine plans of TNK-BP, the joint venture formed by British Petroleum and OAO Tyumen Oil Co, to start pumping its own crude through the pipeline in the reverse direction for export from an oil terminal near Odessa.

## Google Eyes Public Offering

Washington, October 26 (AFP) - Google, the private firm with the dominant Internet search engine, is considering a public share offering next year that could catapult the firm into the ranks of the Internet giants, published reports said.

The Wall Street Journal and Financial Times said the company would sell its shares to the public in a massive online auction, a move that could sharply cut underwriting costs and bypass the traditional Wall Street process for initial public offerings, or IPOs.

People familiar with the talks say investment bankers have estimated Google's value at 15 billion to 25 billion dollars.

## RJR, BAT Agree Tobacco Deal

Winston-Salem, United States, October 27 (AFP) - R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Holdings has struck a stock-and-cash deal worth about 3.1 billion dollars to buy the US operations of British American Tobacco (BAT), the firms said.

Under the agreement, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., manufacturer of Camel cigarettes, will merge its business with BAT's Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corp., which makes Lucky Strike cigarettes.

The new company is to be called Reynolds American Inc.

## Sony to Cut 20,000 Jobs

Tokyo, October 29 (AFP) - Japan's Sony Corp said it would cut 20,000 jobs over three years as part of a move to trim costs and converge its media, entertainment and electronics businesses ahead of its 60th birthday in 2006.

The company announced new measures aimed at trimming 330 billion yen (roughly 3 billion dollars) in annual fixed costs by March 2007 from March 2003 levels, and boosting its operating profit margin to 10 percent from four percent.



Workers assemble electronic products at a Sony plant in Tokyo.  
AFP Photo

## Oakland Bans Superstores

San Francisco, October 25 (Reuters) - The city of Oakland, just across the bay from San Francisco, has banned mega-stores like Wal-Mart super centers from opening there, saying they would threaten smaller stores and depress wages.

The Oakland city council on Tuesday banned the opening of any "big box" retailer with more than 10,000 square feet of nontaxable sales, which typically means floor space devoted to selling groceries. Officials said the action was directed specifically at Wal-Mart.

(Andrea Orr)



A fire above the Wal-Mart parking lot flares up with the evening wind in Lakeside, California, Monday, October 27. California's deadliest outbreak of fires in more than a decade has destroyed at least 1,100 homes, killed at least 13 people and consumed more than 400,000 acres.  
AP Photo



# Capital to Increase Investment in Cultural Relic Protection

By Chen Ying

The Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics held an opening ceremony at Zhengyang Gate on Tian'anmen Square on Tuesday for an exhibition of the body's achievements since the passage of a new cultural relics law on October 28 last year.

The municipality's district-level cultural relic departments

held their own activities to commemorate the issuance of the law and to promote the idea of protecting the city's historic sites and cultural heritage.

The Tian'anmen Square exhibition records the efforts of the local government over the past year to make Beijing known worldwide as a cultural city, including projects

to repair the Ming Dynasty Wall Site Park at Dongbianmen, restore a section of the wall inside the Temple of Heaven compound and construct a new Capital Museum.

"The local government will allocate around 120 million yuan annually from this year to 2007 to protect cultural relics and improve the municipality's environ-

ment," Shu Xiaofeng, vice director of the Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics, said at the ceremony. According to information distributed by the bureau, the Beijing municipal government spent 9 million yuan every year from 1992 to 1999 to strengthen cultural relic protection, and that figure leapt to 110 million yuan in 2000 and 2001.



On Sunday morning, a collective wedding ceremony sponsored by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League was held at the Juyongguan Great Wall. In the event, 56 couples, representing all of China's ethnic groups and dressed in ethnic garb, tied the knot.

Photo by Wang Zhenlong

## 56 Brides for 56 'Brothers'

By Wang Xiaoxiao

To celebrate the success of the seventh Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium held in the capital last Saturday, the Beijing Municipality and the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region hosted a huge concert that evening at Worker's Stadium that included performances from superstars from Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland.

The concert, called "Beijing and Hong

Kong, Taking Off Again," started with a performance by the Royal Hong Kong Police Silver Band, who were followed by Hong Kong pop stars including Joey Yung (Rong Zu'er), Karen Mok (Mo Wenwei) and Aaron Kwok (Guo Fucheng) and mainland stars such as James Li (Li Quan), Sun Nan and Siqin Gerile.

The curtains fell after the dramatic last act, a collective rendition of the song *Descendants of the Dragon* that included all the performers.



Pop megastars turned out to celebrate Beijing-Hong Kong cooperation last Saturday. Photo by Jackey

## Carjackers Receive Maximum Sentences after Being ID'd by Survivor

By Chen Ying

The survivor of a vicious carjacking this spring, despite having suffered terrible injury in the incident, was able to identify his assailants at the Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court Monday last week.

Before the attack, Sang Guoqiu, 27, often drove his white Santana 2000 sedan as an unlicensed taxi cab, popularly called a "heiche," as a way to earn some extra money. At around 2 pm on March 4, he picked up two people, Zhou Yucheng and Liang Dexiang, in front of the gate to the Sihuiqiao Building Materials Center in Chaoyang District. They told him they wanted to go to Huairou District.

Investigations into the case showed that Zhou, from Shanxi Province, and Liang, from Sichuan Province, planned to rob "heiche" drivers in Beijing as a way of getting funds for their business plans. Sang was the first victim of their carjacking scheme.

According to court records, when

Sang stopped the car in front of the Huairou Yanqihu Industrial Development Area, Zhou hit him with a hammer, knocking him unconscious. Zhou then choked him with a steel wire while Liang covered his mouth and nose with her hands. When they thought Sang was dead, they tossed his body out of the car.

Shortly afterwards, however, the two assailants saw Sang was still moving. Zhou then started the car and drove over the poor man twice before racing away with Sang's car as well as 5,000 yuan in cash and his Motorola A6188 mobile.

What the criminals clearly never expected was that Sang could survive the attack. A passerby, Su Haibo, found Sang and quickly contacted the local police. Within days, Zhou and Liang were identified and arrested in Sichuan while trying to sell the stolen car.

After finding the two guilty, the court sentenced Zhou to execution and Liang to life imprisonment.

## Sex Still a Dirty Word

By Hans Leu

Beijing's first sex culture exhibition ended up being shut down the same day that it opened.

Before the opening ceremony for the event scheduled for 9:30 am on Monday, Ma Xiaonian, a reputed sexual therapist, director of the Chinese Sexual Counseling and Therapy Committee and supplier of many of the exhibits, had already been working for two hours to make sure all the items for display at the Shijingshan District Family Planning Service Center were properly labeled and explained.

"This exhibition offers a platform for reviewing the evolution of China's sexual culture," he explained. "Some sex-related relics and items might evoke misunderstanding, so it is crucial to give detailed information about all the pieces."

With the opening approaching, the event's organizing committee twice demanded Ma remove some exhibits and cover the "unhealthy" bits of others on grounds that they were pornographic. Later, a cautionary sign was posted outside the entrance to the exhibition hall that read in bold characters, "Visitors under 18 prohibited."

Once the doors opened, the exhibition proved a popular success, as visitors crowded into the hall to get glimpses of the nearly 700 ancient sex-related articles from China's dynastic past on show.

In order to ensure visitors' safety as numbers mounted, the center's leaders required afternoon guests to enter the show in groups of 10 and set a 10 minute time cap for all groups. When the exhibition closed at 5 pm, there were still many prospective visitors

waiting outside.

Li Nan, a 25-year-old visitor, said, "It is a good exhibition. This is the 21st century, and more Chinese people can think and talk about sex more calmly and rationally these days."

In the opinion of 32-year-old Wang Ning, "The exhibits displayed here should not be used as important means for defining the evolution of Chinese sexual culture," because there is no way to prove they represent the mainstream sexual environment of their respective periods.

The unexpected number of visitors seemed to trouble the center's leadership, who held an emergency meeting as soon as the doors closed for the day.

At first, they told Ma to remove even more exhibits, including ancient sexually-explicit pictures, but by the end of the meeting, the decision was made to terminate the exhibition.

According to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Wednesday, Pan Shuzhen, director of the Beijing Shijingshan District Commission of Population and Family Planning, the body that oversees the service center, explained that it was impossible for a regional family planning commission to fulfill the task of enhancing the whole population's sexual awareness.

A member of the center's staff said on the condition of anonymity that the leadership committee was afraid that some visitors might be negatively affected by misunderstanding some exhibits. That person added that because this was the first exhibition on sexual culture ever held by a local government in China, the center's leaders felt it best to be very cautious.



Yao Yuan

Photo by Gloom

## Local Girl Elected National Environmental Ambassador

By Wang Xiaoxiao

In order to strengthen social awareness and supervision of environmental protection, the State Environmental Protection Administration of China appointed ten people as new "environmental ambassadors" last Saturday at the Second Congress of the China Association for the Environment and Culture.

All of the chosen are celebrities of some sort, except for local girl Yao Yuan, 16, a student at the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Normal University. Yao was clearly nervous when she took the stage at the association's office and accepted certification of her new position from Xie Zhenhua, director of the administration. "I was almost panicking. This position is too big an honor for me," she was quoted as saying in a *Beijing Youth Daily* article on Monday.

Yao began participating in environmental protection activities when just a fifth grade student in primary school. Since she entered middle school, Yao and her mother have used stretches of vacation time to travel to distant parts of the country, such as Hubei and Gansu provinces, to give young people there information about environmental protection.

According to the bureau, the "environmental ambassadors" will help judge public sentiment about environmental protection, report events or behavior with negative effects on the environment, post suggestions and take part in activities organized by the bureau.

Yao Yuan told *Beijing Youth Daily* that she would try her best in her new post. "I would like to give speeches at least once a year to students in remote areas," she added.

## Badaling International Friendship Forest Opens

By Dong Nan

The Badaling International Friendship Forest, which stands at the foot of the Badaling Great Wall, officially opened to the public this Tuesday. There is no admission charge to get into the natural area.

The 133-hectare forest was created through joint efforts of the Badaling Special Zone Administration, US-China Environmental Fund and corporate sponsor ConocoPhillips China. Construction began in December 2000.

The protected area is home to many species of trees and also contains a series of trails studied with education displays and stone platforms with impressive views of the Great Wall.

According to press releases, the forest is designed to balance the needs for restoration and ecological conservation around

Badaling, a heavily-trafficked tourist site.

"Everyone who cares about protecting the environment, Chinese traditions and culture is welcome at the forest. The act of planting a single tree may seem insignificant, but it is a strong symbol of people's concern for the environment," said Zhang Li-quan, director of the Badaling Special Zone Administration, at the opening ceremony.

ConocoPhillips China President Jim Knudsen said, "The Great Wall is a symbol of great pride and cultural and historical significance. It should be protected for future generations of visitors from China and around the world."

The forest is now being managed and maintained by the Beijing Badaling Tourism General Office.

## "English Taxi" Supports Drive for Language Learning

By Zhao Hongyi

Last Thursday, 20 teenage students from the Beijing New Bridge Foreign Language School took part in the "English Taxi" software competition aimed at not testing their driving skills, but their abilities and level of sophistication with the English language.

In the game, participants play-acted as taxi drivers in a fictitious British town. They had to pick up, communicate with and deliver passengers within certain time limits to make as much money as possible. The key to success was clearly understanding and responding to what passengers said.

The game was designed by the British Council, the de facto cultural and education section of the British Embassy in Beijing, specifically for Chinese learners of English.

"The program doesn't have many English new words, but provides a real English lan-

guage and culture environment," said 15-year-old New Bridge student Li Mengfei.

That same day, the British Council donated 30,000 copies of "English Taxi" software to the Organizing Committee for Beijing Speaks English, a group set up by the municipal government two years ago as part of its campaign to prepare for the 2008 Olympics.

At last Thursday's launching ceremony for the learning program held in the Wangfujing Bookstore, committee deputy director Li Honghai said that 3.12 million of the capital's 13 million residents can use English, though admittedly with widely differing levels of sophistication. "We will raise that figure to five million by 2008," he promised.

"We plan to deliver this software to schools and communities," Li added, "And we welcome cooperation like this from foreign language training agencies."

## November Contest to Test Kids' English

By Tony Zhang

The Andros Happy Show - Chinese-English Children's Drama Contest, the largest spoken English competition for kids nationwide, will be run in Beijing, Tianjin and Shang-

hai next month. The event is being sponsored by Beijing Andros Fruit Co. and is aimed at promoting the English-learning part of Beijing's "Olympic strategy." The grand prize is an all-expenses-paid trip to France.



# Danger All Around

By Wang Fang/Mao Yu

**I**t takes time to build an awareness of danger. I am training myself for this right now. Living in a big city, I feel that life is becoming more and more dangerous. Disasters could happen at any time. I think I don't have a strong awareness of danger and don't usually pay attention to information about this. I heard that there are training courses on how to deal with dangerous situations and I want to give it a try.  
— Miss Wen, 25, Student

**I**t is important to be aware of potential dangers, in order to be able to cope in an emergency. Sometimes we cannot control things. In a dangerous situation, some kind of training could help. I am taking part in survival training.  
— Mr. Hong, 27, Lawyer

Although the 9.11 attacks and SARS have raised people's awareness of the kinds of disasters that can befall city dwellers, things like earthquakes, fires, car crashes and people being trapped in lifts have been around for a long time.

In some cases, people are able to react to emergencies calmly and can survive. For example, in August this year, only one person died during the 29-hour power cut in the US. And when 250,000 people were trapped in the London underground recently, no-one was hurt. But when rescue facilities are inefficient and rescuers are inexperienced, tragedies can happen. For instance, 13 people died and 68 were injured when a fire broke out in an eight-story building in Taiwan last August.

A recent survey conducted by *Beijing Youth Daily* and DATA SEA aimed to produce a clearer picture of how people who live in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou think and react to unexpected incidents. From September 26 to September 30, 203 residents from Beijing, 200 from Shanghai and 202 from Guangzhou were randomly chosen with an age span of 18 to 60. There was an equal number of males and females.

## Calm under pressure

Traffic accidents were the primary concern with 68.1 percent of the interviewees. The second biggest fear was power cuts in elevators (13% said it was their main worry). The other dangers people highlighted were fires (9%), epidemics (6%), earthquakes (3%) and power cuts in the subway (4%).

About 12% of the surveyed thought they had a strong awareness of danger, mainly men. Eight percent of women thought they were good at anticipating hazardous situations, while 16% of men felt they had a good nose for danger.

Just over 46% said they would be able to stay calm in an emergency. Nearly 20% admitted they wouldn't. Again, 26% of females admitted they might be likely to panic.

Only 14% of males admitted this.

Over 70% of the surveyed people thought some kind of training on how to cope with emergencies would be a good idea. However, only 23% had actually participated in such training before.

Beijingers were particularly enthusiastic about this training, 80% saying they agreed it was a good idea. Just 67% of Shanghainese and 64% of Guangzhou people agreed.

## Fire!

The survey paid special attention to fire accidents, as fires are one of the most common causes of disasters in cities and it is extremely important for people to know how to use fire control facilities and how to escape from fires. Most of the people surveyed were confident they knew basic fire drill knowledge, particularly Beijingers (88%), followed by Shanghainese (85%). 72% of people in Guangzhou said they would know what to do in a fire.

Regarding emergency exits, 65% of the surveyed said they paid attention to the emergency exits in places like schools, shopping centers and entertainment venues. Many more people in Guangzhou (77%) paid attention to emergency exits than in Beijing (58%) and Shanghai (62%).

The survey also found that 70% knew where to look for fire extinguishers in these places. Around 75% of males said they knew exactly where these facilities were, while only 65% of females knew.

## Escape from transport vehicles

The survey found that although there are emergency exits on buses and aircraft, 27% of people don't pay much attention to these exits, and many don't bother reading instructions on how to use the exits. More people in Guangzhou (71%) said they paid attention to these instructions than in Beijing (48%) and Shanghai (59%).

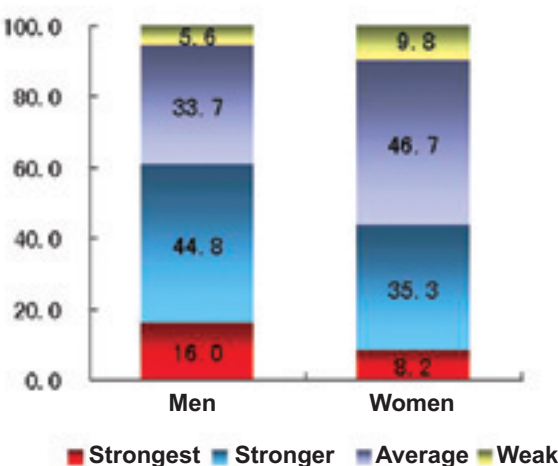
According to the survey, only 38% know how to use oxygen masks on an aircraft. Once again, more males (43%) claimed they knew how to use them than females (30%).



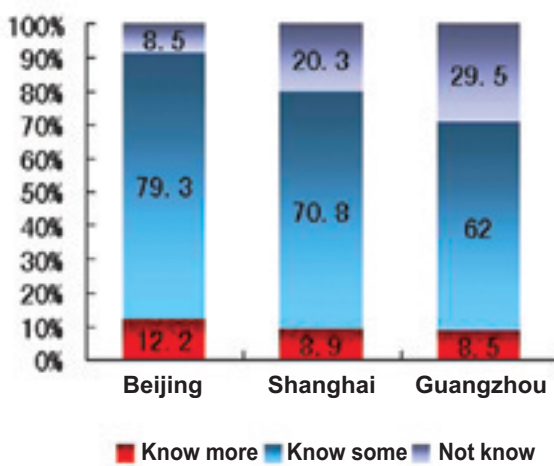
Fire is one of the main concerns for city dwellers.

Photo by Photocom

## Awareness of danger

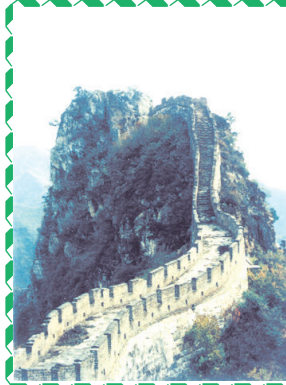


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By Sun Ming

When a local entrepreneur decided to run for office in a remote village in Shanxi Province early this year, he decided the way to do it was to offer a novel incentive to voters: a cash bonus.

Former truck driver Wang Yufeng wasn't the only candidate appealing to voters' material instincts. The incumbent head of the village committee Shi Mingze decided to offer a cash reward to voters as well. A competition began with each candidate bidding against each other. The sum they promised to every villager gradually rose from 200 to 2,000 yuan.

News Probe, an influential program on CCTV, covered the event last Monday.

**Truck driver aims high**

Laoyaotou village, a remote mountain village south of Luliang Mountain, has around 300 families and 1,300 inhabitants.

In March this year, the village began its committee elections. Initially there were two candidates for director of the committee. One was the existing director Shi Mingze, and the other was his deputy, Shi Huizhong.

But on March 21, just three days before the voting was due to begin, Wang Yufeng threw his hat into the ring. Wang, 32, started his own transportation business three years ago.

"I'm not satisfied with the members of our village committee," Wang told a reporter from News Probe. "They are not responsible at all. Also, many villagers encouraged me to run for the position." Wang had never taken any position in the village committee before.

Wang immediately employed motorcycle couriers to distribute his election promises to every family in the village.



Shi Mingze

Wang promised to improve the village's school and local infrastructure including water supply. And at the end of the promise letter, Wang said he would give 200 yuan to every villager if he won the election.

**Price war**

On March 23, the candidate Shi Mingze issued his own hurried response.

Shi, 46, told a reporter from News Probe that he didn't take Wang too seriously at the beginning. "I didn't think he could compete with me, just with his economic strength."

But Shi felt pressured enough to issue similar promises as well as offering 360 yuan to every villager. The same day, Wang responded in turn. He raised the sum to 400 yuan. The second day,

Shi offered 460 yuan per villager.

The village's election committee was perturbed by this turn of events but was unable to stop it.

"I tried to persuade them to stop the bidding competition, but I failed," Shi Jitang, the chairman of the village's election committee, told News Probe. But he also said he didn't think it was a serious infringement for the candidates to offer money to voters.

On March 24, Shi Mingze, Wang Yufeng and deputy director Shi Huizhong all failed to gain a clear majority in the election, so the election committee decided to hold a second vote on April 17. Shi Huizhong dropped out of the election at this point.

On April 1, Wang Yufeng started the bidding again. He sent out his motorbike couriers promising



Wang Yufeng

Photos by Aily

600 yuan to each villager. The next day, Shi matched his offer of 600 yuan.

In the next few days, the competition heated up. Wang Yufeng raised the offer to 800 yuan, 1,000 yuan and 1,200 yuan, with Shi matching him all the way.

"We couldn't get to sleep with those motorbikes roaring around all the time," villager Shi Zhiping told News Probe. Wang and Shi continued dispatching their brigades of couriers with updated offers right up to the eve of the election on April 17, by which time they were both promising 1,500 yuan to each villager.

Just one hour before the vote, Wang raised the bid to 1,800 yuan only for Shi to trump it with a 2,000 yuan offer.

**Come the day**

Officials from the government of Hejin County turned up to supervise the election. They didn't like what they saw.

Xue Changjun, an official from the Hejin County government, told News Probe that he and his co-workers wanted to put a stop to this kind of campaigning. "But we didn't. We were afraid the villagers would attack us."

Meanwhile, as the election began, voters wanted to make sure they weren't going to get shafted so they asked the two candidates to show them the money.

"People even threatened violence if the two guys didn't give a definite promise," said villager Shi Jitang.

"They doubted my ability to pay 2,000 yuan and asked me to

show the money in public. How could I do that?" said Shi Mingze, who wasn't expecting the villagers to be so demanding.

However, Wang Yufeng had anticipated the villagers' scepticism so he turned up with a massive cash box to prove his intent.

"When Wang opened the cash box, the applause was deafening. It's like a dream for us to get so much money so easily," said villager Du Naozi. Laoyaotou village is a poor village where per capita income doesn't get much higher than 1,000 yuan every year. Villager Li Zhiping told News Probe that he and most voters only cared about how much money they could get from the two candidates.

Sure enough, Wang won the election and became the new director of the village committee.

In the afternoon of April 17, the villagers all received 1,800 yuan from the new director. The bill came to nearly two million yuan.

**Why so generous?**

Many villagers told News Probe they were surprised Wang had so much money to throw around. Wang told News Probe that he paid over one million yuan himself and borrowed the rest. "I used all of my savings," he said.

Asked why he had gone to such lengths, Wang replied "I want my village to become prosperous and to help my poor fellow villagers."

But locals offered another reason why the two candidates were so determined.

"They just want to get control of our village's coalpit," said villager Li Fengli. "If they become director of the village committee, they will take charge of the coalpit."

"The winner can easily get his money back in no more than three years," added villager Xing Changcheng.

Laoyaotou village is located in an area rich in coal. There are two coalpits in the village. The smaller one is a private enterprise, the bigger one is a collective enterprise owned by all villagers. However, the bigger coalpit has gradually come under the control of the heads of the village because of the need for supervision.

According to local inhabitants, the heads of the village, including Shi Mingze, have made huge sums of money from the coalpit, but the benefits didn't filter down to the villagers.

"The profit of the coalpit is no more than one million yuan per year," Shi told a reporter from News Probe.

However, according to the calculation by News Probe, the output of the coalpit is 100,000 tons per year, and every ton of coal costs 160 yuan on average, so the profit of the coalpit should be around 16 million yuan per year.

"Everyone in our village knows that Shi is a rich man. He ran for re-election just in order to maintain his control of our coalpit," villager Li Xuefeng told News Probe. "Wang Yufeng is the same. All he cares about is the coalpit. He thinks it will make him a millionaire."

**Bribery or not**

Shi Jitang, director of the village's election committee, refuted any suggestion that Wang had practiced bribery in winning the election.

"Bribery means paying money in secret, but Wang promised to give money in public. Also, he gave money to all villagers, not only the people who voted for him. It sounds unbelievable for someone to spend so much money but I don't think it's a bad thing. On the contrary, I wish all villages in China could follow our example," Shi told a reporter from News Probe.

On August 23, the government of Hejin County sent a group to Laoyaotou village to investigate the election. The group believes that offering money to voters is, in fact, bribery.

"It was definitely an improper campaign," Du Jialiang, the head of the group told News Probe. "We'll settle it soon."

(Source: CCTV)

By Su Wei

Owing to bureaucratic inefficiency, a paper company in Anhui Province has seen its revenue go up in flames while waiting for compensation to be paid. Local courts decided in 1996 that Biquan Paper Making Company had provided sub-standard paper to No.2 Industrial Trading Company, based in Huainan, Anhui. The court ordered Biquan to pay compensation. But after seven years of persistent efforts to get the company to pay up, the courts have admitted defeat. No.2 Industrial Trading Company has had to lay off most of its staff and isn't sure if it can continue paying those that remain.

Last Friday, Liu Xuexi, manager of No.2 Industrial Trading Company, made the latest in a number of visits to Anhui People's Congress Standing Committee. He still hopes the committee can enforce the decision made by Fuyang Intermediate People's Court in 1996 and backed up by Anhui Higher People's Court in 1997. Over the past three years the Standing Committee has instructed the courts several times to administer payment of the due compensation.

The committee told Liu last week they would form a team "to investigate why the courts' orders have not been carried out."

"But now it is impossible for the compensation order to be enforced, because the paper company has gone bankrupt," Liu complained to *Beijing Today* this Monday. According to Chinese law, when a company files for bankruptcy, administration of any court orders applying to it must cease. Liu says he still doesn't understand why it was so hard for the court orders to be enforced.

A complicated case In 1995, No.2 Industrial Trading Company purchased 100 tons of paper from Biquan Paper Making Company, also based in Anhui. It soon became clear the paper was of inferior quality. "Our direct economic losses as a result were more than 500,000 yuan," Liu said.

The company lodged a lawsuit against the Biquan Paper Company seeking compensation. At the end of 1996, Fuyang Intermediate People's Court ordered the paper company to pay 180,000 yuan in compensation as well as refunding around 120,000 yuan to No.2 Industrial Trading Company. Biquan disputed the ruling so the case was taken to Anhui Higher

# Can't Get No Compensation

People's Court in June 1997. This court decided the company should pay 120,000 yuan in compensation as well as the 120,000 yuan refund. And Biquan was ordered to pay up within 30 days.

"We never got a penny," says Liu.

"We kept on writing to Fuyang Intermediate People's Court asking them to get the company to pay the compensation," Liu says. The company also sent staff to Fuyang, more than 200 kilometers away from Huainan, in order to get updates on what was happening.

"Eventually we suggested that the compensation be reduced to the amount that the paper company was willing and able to afford," says Liu. The two companies reached an agreement shortly afterwards. The paper company would pay 80,000 yuan in cash and the rest in the form of a van valued at around 110,000 yuan.

"So far we've received 80,000 yuan but that's all," says Liu. "The van was no use to us as it was too old. Since then we've spent years trying to get the compensation, but in vain."

Also in 1997, the trading company was forced to sell all its property through a public auction to pay off its debts, incurred mainly through the purchase of the 100 tons of paper from Biquan.

Most of the staff of the trading company were laid off and less than 20 percent of those remaining can get monthly social welfare of 140 yuan. "We cannot even cover the unemployment and pension insurance for retired staff at the moment," Liu said.

Why not compensate? *Beijing Today* called Biquan Paper Company asking them to explain the compensation issue.

Jin, administrative director of the company, claimed the issue was "clear and already finished. We have done as the court ordered us."

Jin said the only reason the company didn't pay up immediately was that they did not have enough money at the time. He says it is the trading company that missed "the opportunity to register the van which was an imported model, as the local government later announced imported vehicles used in one area could not



Biquan Paper Making Company

Photo by Zhou Limin

be registered in another area."

Jin claimed Biquan Company had court documents proving they had paid the compensation. "We don't care about what the trading company is saying. But we do not want to talk about the compensation any more," he added.

Peng Jie, general manager of Biquan, used to be the vice head of Jieshou County, Fuyang, Anhui Province and has been a representative of the People's Congress of Fuyang for several years. When *Beijing Today* called him last Thursday, he said he needed some time to think about the compensation issue before accepting *Beijing Today's* interview.

This Monday, Peng said he did not want to talk about the issue through the media any more. "I think our local courts and people's congress have the ability to solve it," he said. "I have full confidence in our courts," he said. "Also we have no time or energy to devote to this issue as we are dealing with our bankruptcy procedures."

Where does power lie? After failing to get anywhere with Fuyang People's Congress Standing Committee, No.2 Industrial Trading Company then raised the issue with Anhui People's Con-

gress Standing Committee, the top authority in Anhui. In the summer of 2001 the committee asked the higher people's court to "find a solution".

One document, dated May 2001 and signed by Song Youshi, administrative director of the committee, says, "The case is a significant one. Peng Jie, as a vice head of Jieshou County should not have become the head of an enterprise."

One statement from Anhui Higher People's Court points out that courts cannot take any action against a people's representative. "Also, the local people's congress did not support taking any action against the representative. So the company was able to resist the courts' orders," says the statement. Another statement presented by the court says, "Management staff of Biquan Paper Company and local officials failed to carry out their obligations as officials and leaders."

Anhui Higher People's Court has also presented statements showing that it put pressure on Fuyang Intermediate People's Court to carry out their decision. "The Fuyang court responded that there was too much local interference and local protection-

ism. They said it was hard for them to administrate their decision," a report from the higher people's court said.

In September 2001, Anhui Higher People's Court sent two staff together with representatives from Fuyang Intermediate People's Court and Jieshou People's Court to Biquan Paper Company, to get them to pay the compensation. "Although we have made efforts in helping the two companies to reach an agreement, we still failed due to the big difference of opinion between the two companies regarding appropriate compensation," the report said.

Early this year, Huang Yuezhong, vice director of Anhui People's Congress Standing Committee wrote to Anhui Higher People's Court, asking Zhou Shuo, president of the court, to see if anything could be done.

In response, the higher court presented a letter saying again that it was hard to solve the issue peacefully due to the excessive demands of the trading company. The letter also pointed out that a local court was handling Biquan's bankruptcy settlement. "Whether the company is to avoid paying off debts through bankruptcy is not clear. We must wait for the investigation result from the local court," said the letter.

Getting away with it "The compensation issue has just fizzled out," Liu said. "I just cannot understand why courts are not able to enforce their orders and make companies pay their debts. Why is it so hard for courts to administrate their decisions?" Liu asked.

Huang Yuezhong says part of the reason is a general trend to ignore court rulings. But it's also a result of "inconsistencies in legal administration among government departments," he said.

A law professor of Anhui University, quoted by Xinhua last Tuesday, said the key point in solving such issues lies in reforming legal administrative bodies, not in tackling companies that do not obey the law. "Only when these legal bodies can really enforce their powers on the basis of everyone being equal in the eyes of the law, can we escape these problems," he said.



## Keepers of the Flame

Beijing Youth Daily encounter a family of Olympic torch relay runners

By Ma Ning / Wu Danhua

At each Olympic Games, the ritual of kindling the Olympic fire is the climax of the opening ceremony. The way it's staged changes every time, but one thing that never changes is the origin of the fire and the starting point for the torch relay: the Temple of Hera in the village of Olympia.

The Olympia lies about 370 kilometers from Athens in the west of Greece. According to tradition, the flame must initially be carried by a young man from the village. On September 20th, *Beijing Youth Daily* visited the village and met the Spiliopoulos family which has so far provided two relay torch bearers. The father, Mr. Spiliopoulos, 59, began the journey of the torch to Munich in 1972. His 29-year-old son began the run for the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. We met them quite by chance, as the family manages an excellent Greek restaurant at the entrance of the village which we stopped into for lunch. Hearing that we came from China, Spiliopoulos junior offered us some Greek hospitality, generously providing his restaurant's best dishes. He also told us the story of his Olympic run. Eleven years ago, aged 19, he had just graduated from senior middle school when he was chosen to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Would you like to see some Olympic torches my father and I have collected?" he asked. Before we could give him an answer, he had already moved around to the back of the restaurant. He came back with two bright polished torches. These were real torches which had once carried the Olympic flame to the games. They attracted the attention of other visitors to the restaurant who gathered around to have a look. Though the design of the two torches was slightly different, they were both nearly one meter long and made of steel. These two torches were printed with symbols of Munich 1972 and Barcelona 1992. Spiliopoulos told me that after each Olympic Games, each of the torch bearers is given a torch as a gift. It's an exclusive honor as the number of torches made matches the number of torch holders and no more are made. "After the relay, each torch becomes a treasure for the bearers, so you can't buy them on the market."

The experience of the Spiliopoulos family was not unique in the village. Spiliopoulos told us that there were no more than 1000 families in the village. Because some 20 young men were chosen every four years in the local area to participate in the Olympic relay, almost every family had a member who once acted as torch bearer. From the Berlin 1936 Olympics to Seoul in 1988, the runners could be aged between 19 and 30 years so Spiliopoulos Senior just qualified for the Munich run when he was 29 years old. But since 1988, the permitted age has been from 19 to 22 years .

The purity of the Olympic flame is a matter of pride to Spiliopoulos so it's no surprise to hear that he was furious about what happened at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. "Sponsors openly sold the relay rights," he says. And at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, "a high-ranking official made use of his power and enabled his daughter to be a torch holder. These things have sullied the purity of the fire. It's an honor accorded

to the finest young athletes to be able to carry the fire; how can they use money and power to buy it? I hope the Athens Games stay as far away from business as possible. The Olympic torch should be spotless." He was happy when Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Games. "We are both ancient civilized countries. We believe the Chinese will respect the Olympic spirit."

Although the Olympic torch is a treasure worthy of display, the Spiliopoulos family did not hang their torches in the hall of their restaurant as a cheap

means of attracting customers. Nevertheless, Spiliopoulos admits that the Olympic Games changed his life and enabled him to succeed in his career. Everyday, innumerable tourists came to the village. His restaurant is one of the few located at the entrance to the village and benefits from an endless stream of customers. Still, he's continuing the local tradition in his own way. Besides operating the restaurant, Spiliopoulos works as a teacher at a gym school to help cultivate a new generation of torch bearers.



## Approaching Athens

The second in a series of seven special reports on the 2004 Olympics



The Temple of Hera

Photos by Cheng Tieliang

# The Return of Olympic Spirit

## Blinding "Golden light" of the Games

By Ma Ning / Wu Danhua

Is commercialization diminishing the Olympics?

After traveling around the world for more than 100 years, the modern Olympics return to their birth place - Athens. However, the Games have already been commercialized to a certain degree. How can the Greeks make the Olympic torch pure again? How can they balance Olympic tradition and business interests?

Manolis Mathioudakis, Chairman of the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers: The spirit of the ancient Olympics and the first modern Olympics in 1896 are permanent honors to each Greek person. But the golden light of money attached to the modern Olympics glares and does not accord with Greeks' traditional aesthetic standards. Some Greeks even do not want to watch the games for fear of the commercialization they will involve.

Telemachos Hytiris, vice minister of Press and Media: The return of the games to their birthplace has great significance for Greece. In view of this, we hope the games can return to the Olympic spirit of old and not be full of commercial items. For example, we have put forward the concepts of "armistice Olympics" and "cultural Olympics". In order to weaken the overall commercial flavor, the Greek government is



Manolis Mathioudakis, Chairman of the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers

investing 4.5 billion euros in the games, which is quite a lot even compared with other governments. The operation of the Olympic Organizing Committee, which seeks sponsors, is not connected to the government. In addition, as a member of the European Union, we hope that the games can represent features of the whole of Europe. In any case, we anticipate that the benefits to our tourism industry in the following ten years after the games will repay our efforts.

Constantinos Cartalis, secretary general of the Greek Ministry of Culture: It is impossible to hold the games without the involvement of business. However, business cannot outmatch sports, which is what we should guarantee. We hope to avoid the excessively business-oriented flavor of the Los Angeles Olympics and Atlanta Olympics, and we definitely won't do anything like selling the torch relay rights. What we are going to do is respect the tradition of the games. The Athens Olympics has 40 sponsors, while Sydney had 80 and Atlanta had 200. The number means a lot.

## The Other Side of the Coin

By Ma Ning / Wu Danhua

It seems not everyone is getting into the true Olympic spirit. Amid recent strikes in Greece, there have been fears that unions would hold the government to ransom as it prepares to try and show its best face to the world. During our stay in Athens, we saw two strikes, by taxi drivers and gas station workers. The latter simply wanted more salary, while the taxi drivers were refusing to install meters in their cars, fearing it was a government ruse to squeeze more taxes out of them.

The taxi drivers' strike led to predictable inconvenience for citizens and was a major blow to tourists such as ourselves who were not familiar with the city.

On the first day of the strike, a lot of people were detained at the airport and could not get to their downtown destinations. They were forced to rely on union-busting drivers using their own private cars to ferry desperate customers around town, for a premium of course.

The strike of the gas station workers was more serious and took up the headlines of most newspapers. When people heard a strike would be held, everyone rushed to refuel their cars in advance. Thus, there were queues several hundred meters long at each gas station, anxious drivers wondering if they'd be in time to get some fuel. This situation stymied one of *Beijing Youth Daily's* intended outings. With the games just around

## Finding the Source

By Ma Ning / Wu Danhua

After our genuine and extremely large Greek meal, we went to the area of the Olympic relics. According to Greek legend, it was here that Zeus, the king of the gods, built his temple. In 776 B.C., the ancient Greeks held their first sports contest here. After that, it was held once every four years until A.D. 394 when the Roman Empire clamped down on the activity. Still it was an amazing run. The Olympics were held 293 times over more than a millennium.

However, at our first look at the "stone bones" of the Olympic relics, we felt somewhat desolate. Standing beside the scattered remains, it was hard to imagine their former magnificence. The words used most frequently by guides were "earthquake" and "war". After more than two thousand years of natural and man-made calamities, it's amazing that anything is left at all. These stones still standing in their original positions seemed like a kind of silent resistance from the peace and health-loving Olympic spirit against violence and disaster.

The scale of the ancient Olympic Games could almost match their present incarnation. There were more than 30 buildings of varying size among the Olympic relics, including almost everything you would expect to find in modern facilities: preparation rooms, showers and equipment room. Of course the areas relating to the sacrifices offered to the gods at each of the ancient games would look a little out of place today.

At the center of the relics is what remains of the temple built in honor of Zeus, reputedly the grandest building of ancient Greece. The temple was made of white marble and was 64 meters in length, 28 meters wide and supported by 34 doric-style columns, each 18 meters high. The walls were decorated with achievements of the Greek hero Hercules. Ever since the modern Olympics resumed the tradition of igniting the Olympic flame in 1928 the torches have been lit at the sacrifice table in front of the nearby temple of Hera. The torch is then taken all over the world to different countries to signify the beginning of the games.

The ancient arena was apparently big enough to hold 40,000 people. It has become a shrine to sports fans around the world. An imitation of it was built in Athens for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. Standing there and gazing into the distance, we saw some tourists holding an improvised sprint. Participants took off their shoes, just as the ancient athletes would have. Colorful modern clothes shone beneath the blue sky and old steps.

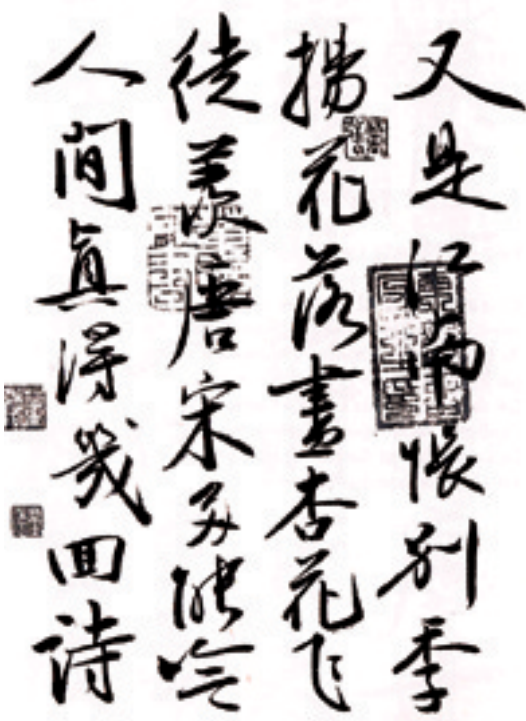
In the past, we were merely aware the games had started in Greece. It was only when we stood where the ancient athletes had that we truly found the "source" of the games.

the corner, frequent strikes are naturally a threat to the government. We expressed our concerns about the possible impact on the games to Telemachos Hytiris, vice minister of Press and Media, and Constantinos Cartalis, secretary general of the Greek Ministry of Culture. Mr Hytiris said he didn't believe it would be a problem. "Strikes won't be launched during the games, because it won't fit the circumstances of the country and the world. People will be thinking about other things. In addition, public opinion will not allow it to happen." Cartalis answered more forcibly. "We definitely will not accept their unreasonable demands. Strikers have their logic and the government has its own logic. We hope and also believe that strikes will not happen during the games".



# From Hangzhou to Paris

**"Only through international experience, being an international student in my case, can a person really feel the importance of his culture. It is like the air; you can only realize its value when it's no longer there."**



One of Dong's poems



Practising calligraphy Photo provided by Dong Qiang



Educating a new generation of Francophiles

Photos by Qu Liyan

By Zhuang Yan

Dong Qiang originally intended to study English. Though the English faculty at Beijing University turned down his application when he was a precocious 15-year old, the French department was eager to open its doors to a talented young student. As the saying goes, he's never looked back.

Now, after having lived and worked in France for more than 10 years, Dong has become one of the most recognized Francophiles in the country. For his work in translating ancient Chinese texts into French, opening a publishing house to broaden the connection between the two countries, as well as his own writing, he was named Chinese Man of the Year by *Le Figaro* magazine in 1998. Currently, he's busy helping with Chinese Culture Year in France, a broad series of events including literature, art, sports, ethnic culture and tourism.

Dong's translations of ancient Chinese poet Li Bai are to be included in a book to be presented to French President Jacques Chirac, as part of the cultural events. Befitting his status as a foreign friend of France, he was appointed adviser for the Chinese Culture Year opening exhibition and this November he will accompany the Chinese Minister of Education to the Chinese Education Exhibition in Paris. Next year, he will help in carrying out French Culture Year in China.

## Approaching France

Having lived in Paris for more than ten years, Dong returned to China two years ago and is now teaching at Beijing University. Now 36 years old, he's just had a celebration to mark the 20th anniversary of his French language studies. From his home in the southern silk city of Hangzhou, Dong always dreamed of going away to university, but he never considered committing himself to French.

"I was just hoping to enter a top university and learn a foreign language, so I might get the chance to go and see the world. So I sent my application for admission to the English Department of Beijing University." Dong had got the highest score in his hometown exams, but he didn't get into the Eng-

lish Department. "The French Department of Beijing University needed good students though, so they asked me to join their department. It was a shock to me, but I did not raise any objection. I was only 15 years old anyway."

In 1988, when he graduated from Beijing University, he heard about a chance to study abroad. An exam was to be held and the top students would be sent to study in France. Though students from all over China took part in the exam, Dong got the highest score. "In 1988, going abroad to study was still unusual. Few people could get the chance. At that time, what was in my mind was just to gain a degree and come back home. I did not think I would stay there for 10 years."

Paris, the capital of European culture and arts, opened the door to a new world for Dong. "Paris had a great impact on me. For the first time in my life, I began to realize what culture is, and what arts and civilization are. China had started opening the door at that time but it was not as prosperous as it is now. And since my entire childhood overlapped the ten years of the cultural revolution, I had little idea of the outside world before. I was attracted immediately by western culture and the life there."

## Re-discovering Chinese culture

Dong had the good fortune to become one of the students of exiled Czech writer Milan Kundera, author of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. This enabled him to enter the world of the Parisian cultural elite. His exceptional fluency in French, together with his curiosity towards foreign culture, helped him get to know some of the leading lights in art and literature.

"The first time I attended a literary gathering, I felt like Robinson Crusoe going to meet Bill Gates. There were so many faces in front of me that I'd seen before on TV or in newspapers, writers and artists, all masters in their fields that ordinary French people would never get to meet. And there I was, a student from China, communicating with them!"

However, while he was delving into other cultures, Dong came to realize how little he knew about his own. He felt the urge to make up for this shortcoming. "To be

able to speak excellent French is the first step, but the crucial part is the content of your conversation," he says.

"Generally speaking, only through international experience, being an international student in my case, can a person really feel the importance of his culture. It is like the air; you can only realize its value when it's no longer there." Dong was also keenly aware of the lack of Chinese culture in Paris.

He started going to the French National Library and spent a great deal of time there reading ancient Chinese books. Also he took every chance during his holidays to travel home to China. He believed what the great poet Du Fu said in advising young intellectuals who wanted to cultivate their minds – read a lot and travel a lot. Dong feels this path has helped him obtain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

## Cultural wealth

Meanwhile, Dong found that in France there were too few books about China. As well as obstructing his own efforts to find out more about his home country, it made it hard for French people to get to know China. He felt he should do something to rectify the situation.

In 1994 together with a French friend, Dong established the first publishing house in France to focus specifically on introducing Chinese culture. He named it Bleu de Chine.

"The name," he says, "means China blue, after the special color used in Ming Dynasty porcelain. People in France love the color and I thought it would remind them of Chinese culture." In the past few years, Bleu de Chine has published translations of many Chinese writers, from masters such as Lu Xun and Shen Congwen, to modern writers like Wang Meng and Zhang Chengzhi.

Dong also became advisor to many big publishing companies, helping them in selecting and promoting Chinese books. Thanks to his efforts, many modern Chinese writers have been able to make their debut in the French market.

Gradually, Dong has become recognized in Paris as an expert in Chinese culture and literature. But he did not feel satisfied. He started a series of lectures, introducing China and Chinese

culture. He delivered more than 200 lectures around the country, on a variety of themes.

Dong then cast his eye to educating younger minds. Believing children to be the most important target group in cultural exchanges, he decided he should do something to introduce Chinese culture to French kids. "If I had not read French masterpieces like *The Count of Monte Christo* and *Les Misérables*, I probably would not have had such curiosity about French culture. If French kids read about Chinese culture, they are more likely to be interested in it when they grow up. Then it would be easier for them to embrace Chinese culture."

Cooperating with two young French friends, Dong wrote a book for kids called *Dreams For Ten Thousand Nights*, to introduce Chinese culture through fairy tales, pictures and calligraphy. The book was a hit in the book market and became a bestseller in 2000. It has even been translated into several other languages.

Dong also published a Sino-French bilingual anthology, a collection of ancient-style Chinese poems of his own, written in calligraphy. But for Dong, the most rewarding moment of his time in France came quite unexpectedly. "The best award I've ever received was when I was on a book signing tour in a local city. The host told me a primary school wanted to invite me to meet the kids there, and when I entered the classroom the teacher said there was a little surprise for me. The kids were standing in line, and I thought maybe they would sing a song, but they started to read aloud a poem I had written. I could see they were trying very hard to recite it correctly and that they wanted to welcome me. I was moved so deeply and felt everything I'd been doing had been rewarded."

As to why he returned to China, Dong said he came back to teach. "There are many good things in western culture that we can learn from. The development and fast growth of our economy is not the same as prosperity in terms of culture," he says. "The strength of a country should also be represented by its education and culture. That's what brought me back."



# No Moss on This Stone

By Zhang Bo

In preparation for the selection of China's national stone, the 2003 China International Jewelry Fair was held at the China International Exhibition Center from October 22 to 25.

The six shortlisted types of stone are: Shoushan stone from Fujian, Xiuyan stone from Liaoning, Hetian stone from Xinjiang, Balin stone from Inner Mongolia, and Jixue stone and Qingtian stone, both from Zhejiang.

After the exposition, a group of specialists are to present their appraisals of the stones to the National People's Congress, which make the final decision.

The Shoushan stone attracted the most visitors and is popularly regarded as the front runner.

"With such a small stone, you can have a taste of the glories of Chinese culture, including calligraphy, poetry and ancient tales. Precious material, fine artistry and high cultural value are the main advantages of Shoushan stone," commented Zhang Guoju, vice minister of land and resources, at the fair.

## A thing of beauty

Shoushan stone, a soft, compact stone greyish, greenish or yellowish in color, is named after the village of Shoushan, 40 kilometers north of Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province. It is the only place that produces this particular variety of mineral.

There are many myths surrounding the origin of Shoushan stone. One is that it was used by the Goddess Nüwa, who used it to patch holes in the sky made by the irascible water spirit, Gonggong. Another relates how the albumen from a phoenix egg permeated the soil near the village of Shoushan and transformed into colored stone.

Formed during intervals of volcanic eruption tens of millions of years ago, Shoushan stone is comprised of lava and minerals from the ground where it solidified, which gradually re-congealed into a colored crystalline ore.

Soft and fragile, Shoushan stone is smooth in texture, rich in assortment, gorgeous in color and fantastic in shape. The stone is engraved according to its composition, into figures, animals, landscapes, flowers, birds, fruit, insects and mythical beasts.

Generally, engraving comprises of three steps. Firstly, a suitable stone is selected. As well as being fine in appearance, it should match the theme of the design.

The next step is to carve the stone. There are three main kinds of carving techniques: *Yundiao*, or three-dimensional carving, in which the stone is carved as a whole to form

a figure or object. *Weidiao* is the carving of Chinese characters in stone. It mainly applies to carving stone seals. The third is *fudiao*, or relief carving.

After carving, in order to give prominence to the natural color and luster of the stone, the craftsman uses *muzeicao*, a local wild plant, to polish it.

## Shoushan in history

Shoushan stone was first quarried during the Neolithic Age. Ancient arrowheads and chisels have been unearthed in Fuzhou's Fucangshan Cultural Relics Site, which dates back to the end of the Neolithic Age, about 4,000 years ago.

During the Northern and Southern Dynasty 1500 years ago, Shoushan stone carvings served as sacrificial objects, confirmed by a stone pig discovered in a tomb found in 1954.

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Shoushan stone was frequently used in religious activities. At that time, many religious objects made from Shoushan stone, such as figures of Buddha, beads and incense burners, were presented to pilgrims in large Buddhist monasteries in Fuzhou.

As China's economic and cultural center began to move southward from the Song Dynasty (960-1270), the fame of Shoushan stone carvings spread.

At that time, the stone was quarried on a large scale and the stone carvings were used in many social activities, including Buddhist and wedding ceremonies, common room decorations and funerals.

It was in the Yuan and Ming dynasties (1271-1644) that Shoushan stone carvings spread to every corner of China. It was coveted by emperors and the subject of numerous poems by scholars.

The use of Shoushan stone reached its historical peak in terms of output and variety of products during the Qing Dynasty, when it was given to the imperial family as a precious tribute.

## Stone culture

"Shoushan stone seal is an important disseminator of China's seal culture, which enjoys a history of over 3,000 years," Guo Facheng, a master stone carver from Fujian, told *Beijing Today*.

It is said that when Emperor Qinshihuang (256-210 BC), the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, ordered his master carver to make his imperial seal, he chose colored stone as the most suitable material for an emperor, and from that time, precious stones became the preferred material for seals.

Throughout China's history, the seal of the emperor has been regarded as the symbol

of nation and dynasty. Gradually, nobles and celebrities, and later the people, began to use their own seals.

During the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Shoushan stone began to be used to make seals widely, and from Emperor Shunzhi (1644-1661) to the last emperor Puyi (1909-1911), each Qing emperor's seal was made of Shoushan Stone.

In the 1950s, renowned artist Qi Baishi carved two seals from Shoushan stone for Chairman Mao Zedong.

At the gala in April this year for the unveiling of the emblem of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, president of the International Olympic Committee Jaques Rogge used his own seal to affirm the emblem, and that seal was also made of Shoushan stone.

Near Shoushan village, there is a kilometer-long mountain stream where *Tianhuang* stone, a variety of Shoushan stone, is quarried. Because *Tianhuang* stone is separate from the main lode and buried deep in the sandy soil, it is the rarest kind of Shoushan stone.

The price of *Tianhuang* stone is now more than 20,000 yuan per *liang* (one *liang* equals 50 grams), which explains the old saying, "it is easier to come by ten thousand *liang* of gold than one *Tianhuang* stone."

At Christie's auction in Hong Kong this July, a folding screen made of Shoushan Stone sold for over HK \$23 million dollars, the highest price ever paid for a Shoushan stone artifact.



Tianhuang carving depicting a scene from *A Dream of Red Mansions*, exhibited at the International Jewelry Fair.



Shoushan carvings on show at the fair.



Photos by Miao Yajie

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加裕华装饰



The Sungari International auctions held tomorrow at the Asia Hotel will mark the start of autumn auction season in the capital in a big way with the first live broadcasts of the sale of works by two modern Chinese masters, Qi Baishi and Fu Baoshi. Two years ago, many voices from the auction world predicted that China was on the verge of a fourth era of widespread public enthusiasm for collecting antiquities, following such periods in the Song Dynasty, mid-Qing Dynasty and Republican period. The participation of CCTV and other major domestic media organizations in this event seems to portend the realization of such a "golden age" for antiques.

By Iris Miao

The SARS epidemic in April cast a heavy shadow over China's art auction market, but those shadows were quickly dispelled by the great success of the Christie's and Sotheby's auctions held in Hong Kong in June. The mainland market, led by the Beijing-based auction houses China Guardian and Hanhai and Duoyunxuan of Shanghai showed a similar recovery, as those firms have posted impressive results at their recent events in terms of sales volume and final prices. At their spring auctions, works by many lesser painters and calligraphers went for twice last year's prices.

Yi Suhao, general manager of Sungari International Auctions told *Beijing Today* frankly that he has been struggling to make sense of the market since SARS. "Prices have been surging out of control, with paintings that used to go for around 10,000 yuan selling for 30,000 or 50,000," he said. Yi offered one possible explanation that, "There are many new buyers, lots of whom are in their 30s and are entrepreneurs or white collar workers."

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of China's art

auction market. From the four art auction houses initially authorized in 1993, there are now 160 nationwide. Beijing alone is home to 24, 19 of which hold regular auctions. According to an article in the September issue of *Cultural Relic World* magazine, there are over 20,000 people working in the auction business, which yields an annual sales volume of nearly 40 billion yuan. The industry leader is China Guardian, which

over the past decade, "Has achieved what Christie's and Sotheby's achieved over the past 30 years in Hong Kong," according to an article in the Taipei-based magazine *Chinese Art News* in January. The total sales volume of the firm's first spring auction, held in 1994, reached just 14.23 million yuan. Such a figure is just a drop in the bucket these days, with a single black-glazed bowl from the Northern Song Dynasty selling

for HK\$12.4 million last October, enough to earn seventh place on the list of the ten most expensive items sold worldwide in 2002, as printed in the *China Art Auction Records* reference book. At its tenth spring auction held in July, China Guardian raked in a total of 194 million yuan.

Through its rapid expansion, the mainland's auction market has taken on some distinctive characteristics. For one thing, prospective buyers have to pay

deposits to register to bid. At China Guardian auctions, deposits of 20,000 yuan are required. During the firm's July auction, the 800 original bidding paddles went very quickly and management had to scramble to organize 200 more spaces to meet demand. Arts and antique lovers used to enjoy auction previews, during which they could actually hold highly valuable pieces in their hands for a closer look, but the deposit

system seems to portend the end of such openness. While auctions were generally free and open to the public a few years ago, now the most important lots can often only be viewed by potential buyers who have made deposits and carry bidding paddles. Though they may be moving away from the masses, auctions on the Chinese mainland tend to be relatively informal affairs, not the formal-wear-required type of events common overseas. Inexperienced individual buyers freely mingle with collectors, expert appraisers and experienced dealers. China Guardian Vice General Manager Kou Qin called such phenomena "Chinese characteristics" and predicted the situation would "improve" as the market matures. "Ten years ago, we didn't know what an auction was either," he noted.

Beyond such superficial matters, there are significant differences between the categories of goods that come under the hammer in the Chinese mainland and in New York, London or Hong Kong. While nearly all-record sales of bronze and porcelain pieces have been made overseas, Beijing has been the setting for record sales of ancient paintings and calligraphy works. The two highest-ranking paintings of the aforementioned 2002 top 10 list were sold in the capital, as *Ode to Yanshan* by great Song Dynasty calligrapher Mi Fu fetched 29.99 million yuan and *Bird Sketches* by Song Emperor Huizong sold for 25.3 million yuan. Market analyst Zhao Yu explained, "First, there are few collectors in the Chinese mainland who understand the value of bronze ware or porcelain ware. Plus, overseas sellers don't think about Beijing as a high-end market and are not used to high prices in RMB, like 10 or 20 million yuan."

Though it set the record, the calligraphy work by Mi Fu was undoubtedly a steal. China's Ministry of Finance used specially-allocated funds and its legal priority purchasing right to buy the national treasure at below market value. "If it was put on open auction, *Ode to Yanshan* by Mi Fu would probably have gone for more than 70 million yuan," said Zhao.

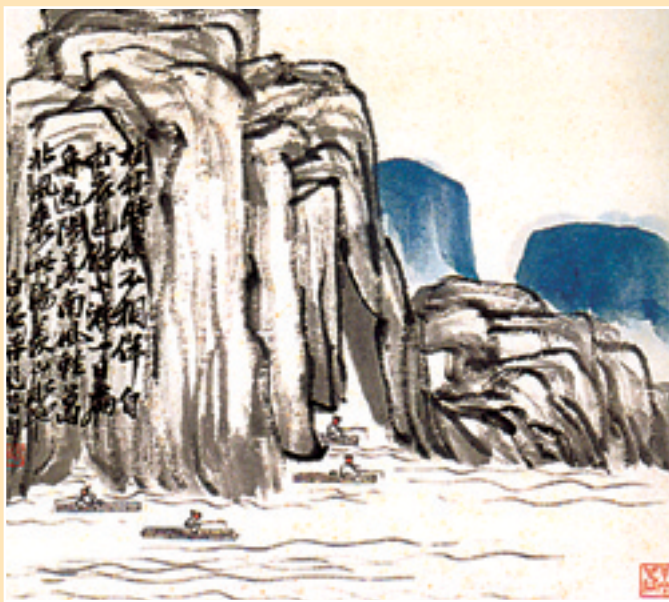
#### Sungari International

Preview: 9 am - 6 pm, closing Friday  
Auction: 9 am - 6 pm, Saturday and Sunday  
Where: Third floor, Asia Hotel

#### China Guardian

Preview: 9 am - 6 pm, closing Friday  
Where: Third floor, Paragon Hotel (Baochen Fandian)

# Domestic Auctions Boom after Decade of Developoment



Four paintings from a set of 12 by Qi Biashi, first sold at a 1994 China Guardian auction for 5.17 million yuan, will be under the hammer again Sunday.

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# International Musicians Perform in Beijing



Gidon Kremer

Three top international musicians performed last week as part of the sixth Beijing International Music Festival.

At the Poly Theater last Thursday, Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer gave a chamber concert with pianist Andrius Zlabys.

The following day, Kremer performed again at the Poly Theater, this time with the China Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Russian conductor Wolde-mar Nelsso.

At the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse Saturday, the London Chamber Players, the first British orchestra to perform at the Beijing Music Festival, performed a broad selection of works from the 17th century to contemporary.

It was the first time for such a renowned group to perform on the small stage of Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

## Guqin Improvisation Concert

The only Chinese musical instrument concert in the Sixth Beijing International Music Festival, a guqin improvisational concert by Li Xiangting was held at the Dongyuan Theatre, near the Forbidden City, last Wednesday.



Li Xiangting

Li first performed some classic guqin pieces on the seven-stringed zither-like instrument, which has a history of at least 3,000 years, including *Li Sao* (*Ode to Departing*), *Liu Shui* (*Flowing Water*), *Meihua San Nong* (*Three Variations*

on the Plum Blossoms), *Guangling San* (*Guangling Verse*) and *You Lan* (*The Solitary Orchid*).

Guest artists Zhang Junying and Qu Xianhe then recited poetry from the Tang Dynasty, accompanied by Li. A highlight of the concert was when the audience was asked to suggest poems, to which Li would improvise a piece of music.

After the concert, many people in the audience asked Li why he was able to improvise on the guqin so quickly and well. He replied that he likes painting, opera, writing poetry, and he also likes pop singers Na Ying and Madonna. "To be able to improvise, one must have a clear understanding of the guqin, and the integration of music, art, history and even natural science."

## Bad Boy No More

A string of pop stars from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan have taken the stage in Beijing recently. The latest, Nicholas Tse Ting-Fung, performed at the Capital Stadium last Saturday.

Before Saturday night's gig, he performed sell-out concerts in Guangzhou, Foshan and Shenzhen.

After a seven month break last year, Tse returned to performing in March 2003. Since then, he has released a new album *Reborn* and worked on some films, including his first appearance with Jackie Chan.

Tse has toned down his act somewhat of late. The guitar-smashing histrionics of the past were replaced with polite bows and sincere protestations of thanks to the audience. For the final number, Tse donned a white angel costume to sing his new hit *Angel*, to the apparent delight of all present.

Last Friday, Warner Music China hosted a concert featuring its top acts at Workers' Stadium to mark the tenth anniversary of Warner Recording China.

The proceeds of the concert, themed "Boundless Music and Eternal Love," were donated to the Soong Ching-ling Music Fund, which helps musically gifted young people who could not otherwise afford to realize their musical dreams.

A dozen pop singers shared the stage, including Amei Chang from Taiwan, Aaron Kwok and Stephanie Sun from Singapore and mainland stars Zhou Xun and Na Ying.

Tickets for the show were in such hot demand that many hopeful fans remained waiting outside until the perfor-

## Boundless Music and Forever Love



Stephanie Sun

mance was almost over.

"It is very different from any commercial show I have attended before," popular actress and Warner's newest singer Zhou Xun said

at a press conference last Wednesday. "I hope I can contribute a little to help these children who love music to realize their dreams."

(Guo Yuandan)



Tse Ting-Fung

Photo by Cui Jun

## WORLDWIDE



Tom Sizemore

### Sizemore Gets Six Months for Beating Up Fleiss

Actor Tom Sizemore on Monday was sentenced to six months in jail for beating up his former girlfriend, the one-time Hollywood Madam, Heidi Fleiss. Sizemore, best known for his parts in *Saving Private Ryan* and *Black Hawk Down*, was convicted in August of domestic violence, making criminal threats and harassing Fleiss during their stormy one-year relationship.

The 41-year-old actor, who has admitted an addiction to crystal methamphetamine, must first complete a residential drug rehab program that he started last month before beginning his jail term in January.



Rosie O'Donnell

### Rosie O'Donnell Court Date Delayed

The court battle between Rosie O'Donnell and her ex-publishing partner was put on temporary hold on October 27, 2003 as a scheduling conflict caused the judge to delay the October 28 scheduled start.

O'Donnell's former partner, Gruner and Jahr USA Publishing, charges that everything unraveled at the briefly popular but now defunct Rosie magazine when the comedienne shut down her daytime TV show in 2002 and went from being known as "fun-loving" to becoming a self-proclaimed "uber-bitch."



Chris Robinson

### Chris Robinson to Sign with Vector

Former Black Crowes front man Chris Robinson is set to sign to Vector Recordings. His solo debut, *New Earth Mud*, was issued last year on Best Buy's Red-line imprint, which shuttered its music operation shortly thereafter. His debut for Vector, which is also home to Damien Rice, will be produced by multi-instrumentalist Paul Stacey, who appeared on *New Earth Mud*.



Courtney Love

### Courtney Love Charged with Drug Possession

Rocker Courtney Love surrendered to Beverly Hills police on Tuesday to face drug possession charges stemming from her arrest earlier this month after breaking windows at a boyfriend's house.

Love, 39-year-old singer for rock band Hole and widow of Nirvana lead singer Kurt Cobain, was charged with possession of the prescription painkillers hydrocodone and oxycodone. Prosecutors said Love, who also lost custody of her 11-year-old daughter Frances Bean Cobain following her arrest, was expected to appear in court for an arraignment on the charges later on Tuesday.

Reuters

Edited by Guo Yuandan

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BEIJING TODAY  
今日北京

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# Logo, Mascot for 2004 Asian Cup Unveiled

The countdown to the 2004 Asian Cup soccer tournament started on Sunday as officials from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Chinese Football Association (CFA) unveiled the tournament's logo and mascot in Beijing.

A ceremony to mark the event was held at the Beijing Television Studio before an audience of VIPs, including AFC Senior Vice President Asad Taqi, Vice President Zhang Jilong, General Secretary Dato Peter Velappan, and CFA Vice President Yan Shido and Vice President Yang Yimin.

The Asian Cup logo is a dragon, a symbol that embodies both the traditions and ambitions of China. In Chinese culture, the

dragon represents strength, dynamism, energy and courage.

The mascot, named Bei Bei, is a fun and friendly monkey, as next year is the Chinese Year of the Monkey.

Since the unveilings, representatives from the Asian Cup Organizing Committee have launched one week of inspections of all the stadiums and facilities to be used during the event next year.

The 2004 Asian Cup, which will be held from July 17 to August 7 in the four Chinese cities of Beijing, Ji'nan, Chengdu and Chongqing, will be the largest event of its kind ever with 16 teams participating.

(Xinhua)



AFC Senior Vice President Asad Taqi attended Sunday's logo-unveiling ceremony.



"Bei Bei," the monkey mascot

Photos by Photocom

## Broken Promises Haunt Pro Football Leagues

### Players strike, file suits to claim back pay

By Hou Mingxin

Since the Chinese National Football League – the country's first professional sports league – was launched in 1994, hundreds of Chinese football players have gone on to fame and impressive fortune.

"The professional league made some of those poor guys millionaires overnight," said Jin Zhiyang, a well-known Chinese football coach, during an interview with China Central Television (CCTV) last year.

Most of the 15 Series A league clubs receive massive financial support from domestic and international companies as well as even more funds from broadcasting rights and advertising income from the Chinese Football Association (CFA), the manager and operator of the league.

The local Series A league club, Beijing Hyundai, signed a three-year sponsorship contract with that Korea-based carmaker in March worth 118 million yuan.

Such funding means players in Series A squads do not have to worry about their incomes, and starting line players can earn over 1 million yuan per season from salary payments and bonuses.

The situation is very different, however, for budding players in the 14 Series B league clubs or those at lower levels. Not only do they earn a fraction of their Series A counterparts, they are often shorted money that they are due to receive.

**Players rise up**

On September 31, eight members of the Series B league club Hailifeng, based in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, refused to play in a match. The eight players, all starters, were Pan Weiming, Li Haiqiang, Du Bin, Jian Jianhui, Li Qilai, Luo Yi, Xie Wei and Tang Ming.

The reason for their "sit-out", according to a report published in the Guangzhou-based *Soccer News* on October 1, was that they were owed back pay and bonus money for nine matches, eight from last season and one from the current season, worth around a total of 2 million yuan.

They told the *Soccer News*



Lange (blue) suffered its eighth straight loss to Zhejiang-based Licheng on August 9 in Harbin. The whole team of Lange went on strike in September.

that with only two months left in the season, they were convinced they would not get their money this year without taking action.

That day, the eight players faxed letters to the mayor of Qingdao, Shandong Province, home to the team's owner and sponsor, and the CFA seeking their assistance. "They have considered the worst result of their actions, being fired and forced to end their careers," the *Soccer News* report said.

On September 2, 27 players and coaches from the Harbin-based Lange Football Club refused to train or play until club

owner Li Zhisheng paid the over 4 million yuan of salaries, transfer fees and bonuses owed to them. The team resumed regular training and playing soon after following a promise from management that they would get their money quickly.

On October 4, the players each received one month-worth of defaulted salary, but the club still owes its players several months' of salary and bonus payments.

During a match four days later with the Shishi Club of Xianmen, Fujian Province, four of Lange's international players refused to play because of the

team's ongoing debts. Their demands for fast payment were not met and the team ended up losing the game.

**Seeking legal redress**

In the 10-year history of China's professional football leagues, there have been many cases of clubs defaulting on players' payments.

"I have been a football player and a coach, and played for a Series A league club, Qingdao Hainiu. I know these kinds of cases have happened at almost every Chinese club," Wang Shouye, general manager of the Hailifeng Football Club, told *Soccer News* on October 1.

He did not deny claims that the club had defaulted on the eight players' payment, explaining the team was temporary short of financing. Wang promised that the eight players could return and would receive their money, as long as they first admitted their mistake in refusing to play.

Over the past decade, most players have chosen to face payment problems with quiet perseverance, but others have taken more active measures, including filing lawsuits.

On June 23, Li Bing, Gao Jianbin, Yao Xia, Wei Qun and Xu Jianye, players for the Dahe Football Club, a former Series A squad in Sichuan Province, appealed to the Chengdu Working Arbitration Committee to help them claim a total of over 2 million yuan in salary payments owed to them. The five players also faxed a statement to FIFA in an attempt to seek assistance from the international soccer authority.

On May 15, 21 former players and goal-keeper coach Sun Xianyi of Liaoning Youth Football Team filed a suit with the Shenyang Intermediate People's Court in Liaoning Province against the Liaoning Football Club, demanding the team turn over 5.4 million yuan in unpaid bonuses.

Exactly two weeks later, three international players from the Series B league Gansu Tianma Football Club went on strike to demand payment of defaulted salary. One of them ended up being fired.

**Reasons for default**

Football is a massively popular sport in China, with tens if not hundreds of millions of enthusiastic fans around the country. Being host to a top club is a real honor for a domestic city, and sponsorship or ownership of such a team can be an excellent way to promote the reputation of a company.

For this reason, many enterprises try their hand at purchasing and managing football squads, but few have the kind of experience or expertise needed to efficiently run such an organization. Moreover, many corporate owners do not forge long-term plans for their squads, they simply concentrate on the short-term benefits for their company's reputation and brand-building.

Such pursuits normally entail promising high bonuses for individual and team performance as ways to push team results and attract top-drawer talent. When team performance is less than satisfactory, however, many companies slash financial support, bilking players of their promised money.

This season, only the top two teams in the Series B league clubs will get the chance to move up to the Premier League, which will be launched next season. Hailifeng and Lange have no shot, as they are wallowing at the bottom of the league ranking and Lange's situation is still deteriorating, making it likely that the squad will fall into a lower level league next season. Thus, it is not surprising that these are two of the teams most guilty of defaulting on player payment.

**Good news for players?**

In mid-October, the CFA issued a notice regarding defaulting on players' salaries and demanded Lange and Hailifeng pay all the money owed to their players, *Soccer News* reported last Wednesday.

Lange subsequently gave a statement to *Soccer News* saying that the money would be given to the players before today. The team's angry players told the paper that they would continue their strike if the money was not turned over as promised.

The *Soccer News* report also said that last Wednesday, through the help of the CFA and the Qingdao Football Association, eight Hailifeng players ended their strike and returned to the club's active roster. According to that article, the eight players will receive punishment from the club, but there was no mention of when they would receive their money.

## Champions By the Numbers

**1** - Teams from the ABA (American Basketball Association (1967-1976)) to win the NBA (National Basketball Association) Championship...the San Antonio Spurs have captured the title twice...the Indiana Pacers and New Jersey Nets, formerly of the ABA, have made it to the NBA Finals, but not won the championship.

**2** - Father and son tandems who have won NBA Championships...the first pair was Matt Guokas Sr. (1947) and Matt Guokas Jr. (1967)...Danny Ferry and his father Bob Ferry (1978) became the second father-son tandem to accomplish the task when Danny and the Spurs won the 2003 NBA title.

**3** - Gregg Popovich is one of three active coaches with multiple NBA Championships ... he joins an exclusive club with Phil Jackson (nine titles) and Pat Riley (four titles).

**4** - Members of the NBA's 50 Greatest Players who won a championship in their final NBA season...last season, David Robinson joined the elite ranks of Bill Russell (Boston, 1969), Sam Jones (Boston, 1969) and Bill Sharman (Boston, 1961).

**6** - Teams that have captured an NBA Title in the last 20 years ... a quick history lesson ... over the last two decades the Bulls and the Lakers have won six titles each while the Spurs, Celtics, Pistons and Rockets have each won two.

**8** - In NBA history only eight players have been named the Finals MVP multiple times in their careers ... Michael Jordan leads the way being named the Finals MVP six times ... Magic Johnson and Shaquille O'Neal have each captured the honor three times and Tim Duncan, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird, Hakeem Olajuwon and Willis Reed each have won the award twice.

**15** - Players have won five or more NBA Championship rings...with the Spun's championship last season, Steve Kerr joined the list that is headed by Bill Russell's 11 titles and includes Sam Jones (10), Tom Heinsohn (8), K.C. Jones (8), Tom Sanders (8), Frank Ramsey (7), Michael Jordan (6), Scottie Pippen (6), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (6), Bob Cousy (6), John Havlicek (6), Magic Johnson (5), Dennis Rodman (5) and Michael Cooper (5).

**21** - Tony Parker's age at the end of the 2002-03 season ... making him the fourth youngest participant in a NBA Finals ... he is the second youngest point guard ever to play in the Finals behind only Magic Johnson who was 20 years old in 1980.

**23** - Combined blocks by the Spurs (10) and the Nets (13) in Game 4 of the NBA Finals set a new record, topping the previous mark of 22 reached twice, in the 1980 NBA Finals by Philadelphia (13) at Los Angeles (9) on May 4, 1980 and during the 1982 NBA Finals, Philadelphia (13) vs. L.A. Lakers (9) on June 6, 1982.

**32** - Tim Duncan's 32 blocks in the series set a Finals record for the most blocks recorded in a Finals series ... his eight blocks in Game 6 tied the Finals record for the most blocks in a single Finals game.

**41** - Combined number of seasons played by Steve Smith (11), Danny Ferry (12) and Kevin Willis (18) before they captured their first NBA title.

**454** - Minutes logged by Spurs center Mengke Bateer in his NBA career (regular season and playoff games) before winning his first championship ring.

**34,954** - Minutes logged by Spurs center Kevin Willis in his 19-year NBA career (regular season and playoff games) before winning his first championship ring.

(source: nba.com)



# The South Is Rising — as a Place to Eat



Yellow-fin fish cooked with corncakes (xiaohuangyu tie bingzi), 28 yuan, at Shunjiafeng



Dumplings in spicy soup (mala tangjiao), 16 yuan, at Jiupinxiang



Stewed sheep backbones (yangxiezi), 45 yuan, at Yuanyiguo

Photos by Lou Ge

By James Liu

The historic southern section of the capital, now commonly regarded as less developed than the city's northern or eastern reaches, is still home to some top-class restaurants. The Caishikou area in particular has become a dining hotspot thanks to the nearly 20 restaurants that stand on the northern side of Guangnei Dajie.

Over the past two years, Caishikou has become popular due to its diverse dining options, with Sichuan, home-style, hotpot, barbeque and other style of food available, although there is no Western fare as of yet. Area restaurant owners and managers actually seem to be glad to see more competitors moving in around them. "One solitary restaurant would not be able to survive in this area. We definitely need to create a whole atmosphere, like Ghost Street, to attract people," Chen Yunhua, manager of the Mala Youhuo restaurant (covered in our October 12 issue)

told *Beijing Today*. The region has serious dining heritage, as it is close to Niu Jie, historically the main home of Beijing's Muslims and long a top spot for Muslim-style eating.

## Shunjiafeng Restaurant

This huge restaurant is the largest on the street and features the most extensive menu. The kitchen can cook up roast duck, seafood, Muslim or Chinese home-style dishes, but loses out in having no true specialties.

Head chef Zhao Junjiang highly recommends the roast duck and seafood dishes, which at least offer impressive value. A full Peking duck set, with pancakes, sauce and all, is just 38 yuan. The over 50 seafood dishes on the menu are made from materials flown in from Weihai in Shandong Province and generally cooked Shandong-style. Yellow-fin fish cooked with corncakes (xiaohuangyu tie bingzi, 28 yuan) is tasty, typical fare of Shandong farmers. Another solid seafood choice is stewed roe with soy sauce (jiangmen yuzi, 28 yuan).

During the SARS crisis, Shunjiafeng was the only restaurant along the street to stay open. That decision literally paid off, as the eatery bagged nearly 10,000 yuan in daily revenues in the otherwise quiet spring. Success, however, does not seem to have gone to the head of manager Lu Wenjiang, who has ambitious plans for the development of his restaurant. "We will add hotpot and authentic Sichuan cuisine to our menu," he said. Chinese menu only.

**Where:** 91 Guang'anmen Neidajie, Xuanwu **Open:** 9:30-3 am **Tel:** 8316 0500 **Average cost:** 30 to 50 yuan per person

## Jiupinxiang Jiaozi Restaurant

Of the two dumpling restaurants on the street, this is the larger and cheaper one, but still manages to have superior jiaozi. The dumpling offerings come with vegetarian, beef, seafood or lamb stuffings, each available in dozens of varieties. Prices depend on filling, ranging from 1.6 yuan for 50 grams of the most basic jiaozi to 6.8 yuan per 50 grams of top-of-the-line crabmeat dumplings.

The dumplings come either boiled with special soups and served in casserole pots or pan-fried. The boiled ones are available with sour, seafood, spicy and other kinds of soup to be eaten as a filling and soothing one-pot meals, priced at 12 yuan to 20 yuan per dozen dumplings. The simpler pan-fried dumplings, or *guotie*, go for 10 to 16 yuan per dozen.

The kitchen can also cook up dumplings with special-request fillings, though they are a little pricier than the on-the-menu varieties. Service is friendly and prompt, with dumplings normally on the table less than 10 minutes after ordering, but the waitstaff are not entirely professional. Chinese menu only.

**Where:** 89 Guang'anmen Neidajie, Xuanwu **Open:** 9-3 am **Tel:** 6318 0518 **Average cost:** 20 yuan per person

## Qianxiyuan Sanqianli BBQ Restaurant

For every successful original restaurant on Guang'anmen, there is at least one copycat offering very similar fare. Qianxiyuan Sanqianli

is one such mimic, taking its cues from the Mingyue Sanqianli Korean-style barbeque restaurant next door.

From menu options to the large French windows, the two restaurants are remarkably similar. Qianxiyuan's speciality (and Mingyue's, by default) is beef from all parts of the cow that can be grilled up at customers' tables or by the waitstaff. The

prices at Qianxiyuan are somewhat higher than at its neighbor, in part as compensation for the sizeable football shooting area set up by owner and die-hard football fan Liu Wenting. Diners who score get a discount on their bill.

Like its neighbor and other Korean barbeque restaurants around town, the menu includes beef tenderloin (*niu lijì*, 45 yuan per plate), cow tongue (*niu she*, 40 yuan), and mixed beef (*kao niurou*, 60 yuan). Platters of chicken or vegetables sliced thin and ready for grilling go for 6 yuan to 16 yuan for 400 grams. Chinese and Korean menu available.

**Where:** 79

Guang'anmen Neidajie, Xuanwu **Open:** 10 am – 12 pm **Tel:** 8315 2999 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

## Yuanyiguo Restaurant

This specialist in *yangxiezi* (stewed sheep backbones) marks the end of the restaurant row on this street. Its 24 tables are perpetually packed and lines often snake out the door during mealtimes.

The secret to owner Liu Guixia's success is her special *yangxiezi* recipe that makes use of more than 30 herbs and spices. The heady aroma emanating from the restaurant is likely to lure even people hard set against the idea of gnawing on sheep spine.

A regular order of *yangxiezi* costs 35 yuan and includes three kilograms of meaty vertebra, while a larger four-kilogram set can be ordered for 45 yuan. The stew is served hot and kept that way by gas burners inset in every table. Once diners have picked their way through the bones, they can use the remaining broth as a delicious base for hotpot with traditional ingredients such as thin-sliced lamb and mushroom. The soup can also be ordered alone, without the bones, for a hotpot meal for 20 yuan.

The restaurant is tight and noisy, but a fun place to dig into a pile of bones and people-watch. Chinese menu only.

**Where:** 65

Guang'anmen Neidajie, Xuanwu **Open:** 10 am – 11 pm **Tel:** 6304 0943 **Average cost:** 30 yuan per person



Spicy chicken wings (xiangla jichi), 18 yuan, at Shunjiafeng



Pan-fried dumplings (guotie) 16 yuan



A full yangxiezi meal

## Kitchen Confessionals

## Chef Wang Takes Tan Family Cuisine to the People

By James Liu

Tan Family Cuisine, an exceptional branch of traditional imperial cooking, has a long-established place at the head of Beijing's high-end food market. The city's most famous purveyor of this closely-guarded culinary tradition is the Tan Family Restaurant in the Beijing Hotel. Over the years, the many top chefs trained in that establishment's reputed kitchen have moved on, making Tan-style cooking available at a few other restaurants around the capital.

With rare exception, Tan Family-style restaurants are very expensive, mostly due to use of such choice and pricey ingredients as shark fin and abalone. These exotic materials have long been treasured for their textures, flavors and health-preserving powers, explaining why they were popular on the tables of imperial and official families of China's dynastic past.

Yet Gao Yuanchao, head chef of the Qingxin Restaurant, which stands at the north side of Tuanjiehu Park, is leading a mini-revolution, trying to offer Tan-style cooking at prices the masses can accept.

He grew up in Shunyi District and headed to the capital in 1971 at the age of 16 to start working. At that time, it was national policy to ship young people from cities out to rural regions for "reeducation through labor." "Thus, the capital had a shortage of workers in the service industry. Then the government decided to hire young people from neighboring counties. I was one of the lucky few picked to enter the city," Gao recalled.

His luck got even better when he was appointed to an apprenticeship at the Tan Family Restaurant in the Beijing Hotel under the tutelage of head chefs Wang Binghe and Li Zhigang.

Gao worked his way up from dishwasher to qualified chef. In 1986, the restaurant sent him to Florida in the US, where he cooked up elite Chinese cuisine for guests at Walt Disney World until 1989. Then, in 1999, he quit the Beijing Hotel and moved to Jiuhua Shanzhuang, a famed restaurant and resort in Xiaotangshan, to improve that establishment's reputation. He took the head chef position at the Qingxin Restaurant this year.

His dedication to keeping quality high and prices low can make it tricky to cook up authentic versions of Tan-style dishes that call for expensive ingredients, but he generally seems to find a way to pull it off. One of Gao's creations that matches his high demands is rice with nine different kinds of soup (*jiupin laofan*), including a shark fin variety, which fetches just 28 yuan.

"The shark fin soup we offer with the rice is no joke. It usually takes us three days to prepare," he explained to Beijing Today. The soup is made from dried fins, which usually sell for 1,500 to 2,000 each, that are soaked in very hot water for four hours, a procedure called *paochi*.

The next step is removing all sand, bones and meat from the fins, a process known as *guasha*. The cleaned fins are then boiled in a pot of fresh water along with chicken, mushroom, ham, Sichuan peppercorn (or prickly ash), ginger and other spices, then rinsed with fresh water and boiled in the same concoction again.

This step can take up to two days and is intended to fully remove the fins' heavy fish odor.

Fins from sharks' backs, sides or tails can all be used, with the dorsal, or back, fins the best. No matter what part of the shark they come from, fins are increasingly rare ingredients, as sharks have finally been classified as legally protected animals. "Of course, shark fin is not something that most people can eat every day. But during special occasions, holidays or other events, people can come to our restaurant to try it at prices that they can afford," Gao said.

Besides his Tan Family-style masterpieces, Chef Gao is also very capable with foods of China's Sichuan and Huaiyang cuisines. The Qingxin restaurant offers a range of his creations at remarkably reasonable prices, starting at just 6 yuan.



Stewed cow face (pa niulian), 96 yuan



Stewed shark fin (huangmen yuchi), 888 yuan





The Beijing Quartet will join their Shanghai counterparts for a performance on Tuesday.



## The Sixth Beijing International Music Festival

### Opera Highlights

At the Opera Gala Concert, soprano Barbara Frittoli and tenor Giuseppe Sabbatini will lead performances of a selection of pieces backed by the Vernezia Orchestra.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** Tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-800 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

### Roman Holiday

The Vernezia Orchestra take the stage again, conducted by Paolo Olmi, for a symphonic concert.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** Saturday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-800 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

### Maisky's Magic

Conducted by Bramwell Tovey, the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra will perform with Russian-born guest soloist Misha Maisky.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-680 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

### Closing Comments

The closing concert of the Beijing International Music Festival will be performed by the NDR Symphony Orchestra, led by Christoph Eschenbach, the orchestra's chief conductor since 1998. Pianist Tzimon Barto will solo.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** November 5, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 480-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

### World Tour

The Shanghai Quartet will take the stage for a Beethoven Cycle concert, the starting performance in its coming world tour. The program will include *Quartet in C Major*, Op. 59 No. 3 by Beethoven, *Octet* by Mendelssohn (performed with the Beijing Quartet), as well as Chinese pieces such as *Miao Mountain Morning* and *Harvest Celebration*.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** November 4, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-280 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5176

## Exhibitions

### Li Xiaoke Solo Exhibition

A show of landscape works by Creation Gallery owner Li Xiaoke, son of famed painter Li Keran, inspired by his many trips to Tibet.

**Where:** Creation Gallery, Ritan Donglu **When:** till Sunday, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

### Wang Nan Solo Paintings Exhibition

Wang Nan's paintings combine Chinese calligraphy with Western elements.

**Where:** East Gallery, Deshengmen Watchtower, North Second Ring Road **When:** till November 9, 9 am - 5 pm (except Monday) **Admission:** 2 yuan **Tel:** 8201 4962

### Joint Oil Painting Exhibition

Works by four artists address memories of beautiful times past.

**Where:** New Millennium Art Gallery, Diyang Building, 2 Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** November 6-26, 9 am - 6 pm **Tel:** 8453 6193

## Lecture

### Deep Look at a Buddhist Temple

To learn to tell one Buddhist temple from another, come spend an afternoon with master monk Shangmao of the Guangji Temple and Elyn MacInnis from Harvard University Divinity School, who will unlock the secrets of the significance of temples' buildings and motifs. Learn why some of arhats statues have long eyebrows or special hand gestures, discover the meaning of the "Eight Treasures," hear why the King of the North holds a snake, and understand temple layout. English translation provided.

**Where:** Meet at entrance of Guangji Temple, east of White Pagoda Temple, Fuchengmen Neidajie **When:** Saturday, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8462 2081

## Activities

### That's Beijing's Second Annual Halloween Bash

Attention Guys and Ghouls! *That's Beijing* is sponsoring its second Halloween blowout with DJs Usami and V-Nutz spinning funky breaks beats to help you get freaky for All Hallows Eve. Come in costume - prizes for best outfits include two round trip tickets to Hong Kong and an all-expenses ski weekend for eight at Nanshan Ski Resort.

**Where:** Switch-On bar, Central Park, Guandongian Nanjie, Chaoyang **When:** Tonight, 9 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6400 4068

### Halloween Blowout

Get Lucky presents a monstrous Halloween program of ten bands including Float, Reload, Spring and Autumn, Viewfinder, Battle-axe and others.

**Where:** Get Lucky Bar, 500 meters east of University of International Business and Economics (Jingmao Daxue) south gate **When:** Tonight, 8 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6420 4249

### Ken Ishii China Tour

International techno star Ken Ishii returns to Beijing for Halloween. Performing alongside Mickey Zhang and Dio, Ishii brings his own brand of music honed over ten years of jamming all over the world.

**Where:** Loft Space, 4 Gongti Beilu **When:** Tonight, 10 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 13693315022, 6501 7501

### Halloween Hellfire!

The details are still firmly under our witch hat, but we promise that blood will boil, cauldrons will bubble, and you'll be stinking drunk by the time the night is over.

**Where:** Treelounge, 100 meters south of Agricultural Exhibition Center **When:** Tonight **Admission:** free



## The Rocky Horror Picture Show Party

The horror...the horror. Dress code Brad (men), Janet (women) or a Transylvanian (other). A cast of professional actors will be on hand to bring the cult classic to life.

**Where:** Vibes, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi **When:** Tonight, 10 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6437 8082, 13901382831 (English / Chinese)

## Movies

### The Matrix: Revolutions

Directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski, starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss and Monica Bellucci. War breaks out on the scorched Earth as the machines invade Zion in this concluding chapter to the Matrix trilogy. Whereas Reloaded is about life, Revolutions addresses death. In English.

**Where:** UME International Cinplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** from November 5 **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

## Stage

### Russian Culture Festival

This extended event includes performances of Russian dances and concerts. Tonight at 7:30, the outstanding Ballet Moiseyev will perform folk dances at the Beijing Exhibition Center Theatre, with tickets going for 80-800 yuan, the Peking University Concert Hall will host a jazz show, 10-60 yuan per ticket, and the State Kuban Cossack Chorus and Dance Troupe will take the stage at the Century Center, with tickets going for 80-380 yuan. For ticket information, call 6406 8888.

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By Guo Yuanan

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Along the southern side of the western end of Wenjin Jie, the red and gray walls of Zhongnanhai (中南海) enclose the seat of the Central Government. The tree-lined streets around here are filled with flowers in the spring, and shaded in summer.

Opposite the walls of Zhongnanhai, a little way up Xishiku Dajie (西什库大街), is North Cathedral (北堂), counterpart of East Cathedral at Chongwenmen, South Cathedral at Xuanwumen and West Cathedral at Xizhimen. The original North Cathedral was built in 1703, on a piece of land granted by Emperor Kangxi, on the west bank of Zhongnanhai. Kangxi also had a tablet placed there with an inscription that read "the real source of all creatures." In 1827, Emperor Daoguang had the



church demolished and confiscated the land, but in 1860, Emperor Xianfeng returned the land and a new church was built six years later. In 1887, the church was moved to Xishiku, its present location, to make way for an enlargement of the Forbidden City. The church, known locally as Xishiku Church (西什库教堂), is the largest in Beijing.

Wenjin Street is named for the Beijing Library (北京图书馆), formerly the royal library and the largest in China. Today, it is famous for its collection of ancient books and is part of the National Library of China at Zizhuyuan, on Baiyi Lu.

Two hundred meters east of the library is a bridge named Jin Ao Yu Chong Qiao (金鳌玉虫桥), or Golden Tortoise and Jade Worm Bridge, that divides the big lake, once known as Tai Yi Chi (太液池), into Nan Hai (南海) and Zhong Hai in the south and Bei Hai in the north. It is said that the Mongolian founders of the Yuan Dynasty had never seen the sea. They named these lakes "seas" on their march south, when they were conquering China nearly eight centuries ago. Today, the lake is considerably smaller, but still a key landmark in Beijing.



Beihai Park has a history of over 1,000 years and has been a royal park for several centuries, during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1645-1911) dynasties. It is now a popular attraction for both tourists and local residents all year round. In winter, the iced over lake is over-run with skaters.

From the bridge, the northwest corner tower of the Forbidden City looms to the southeast. The area around the moat surrounding the palace walls is now a haven

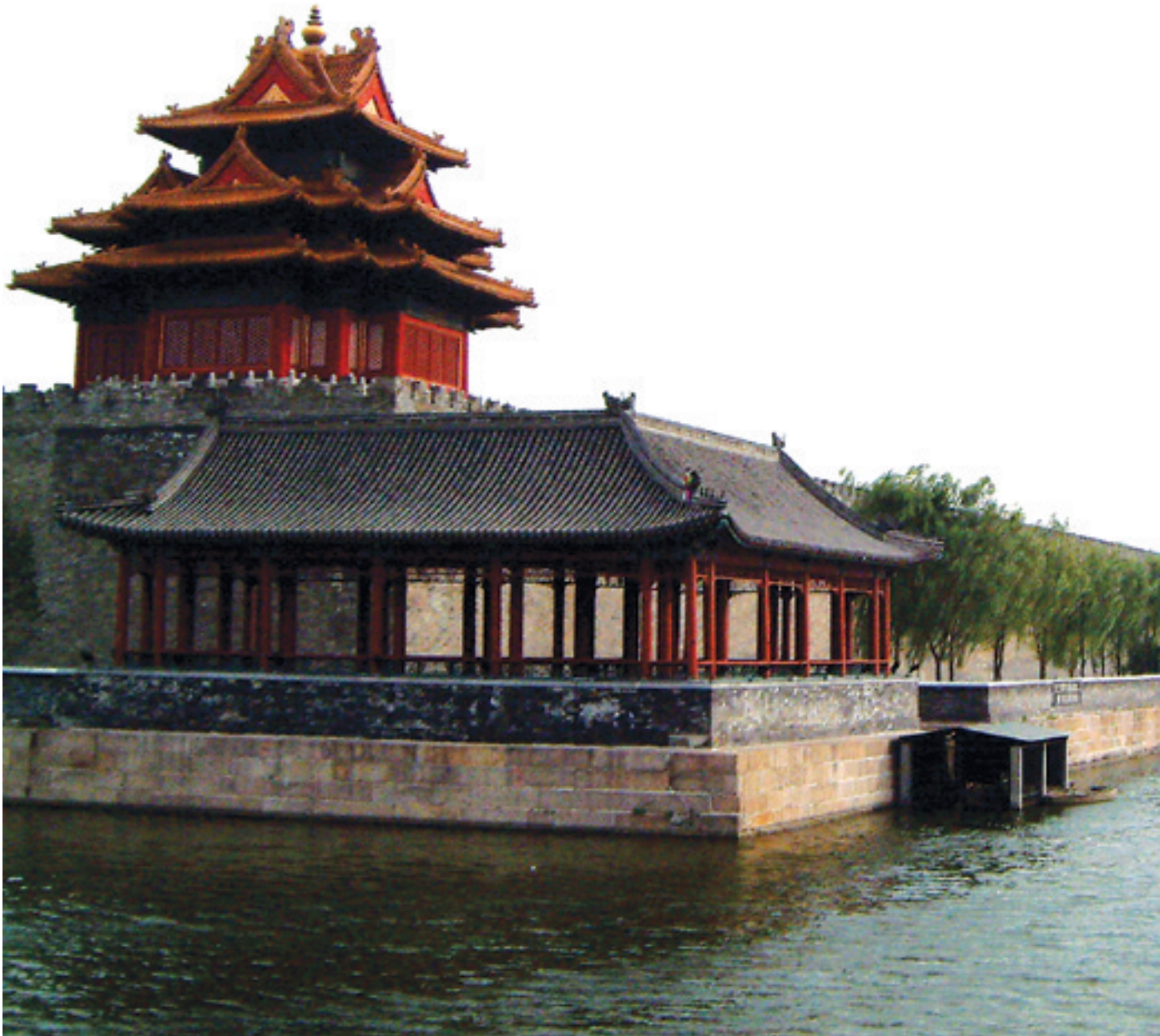
By Zhao Hongyi

Autumn is the best season in Beijing, and peddling your bicycle along some of the city's prettier downtown streets is the perfect way to enjoy it.

A spin down Chang'an Avenue is always fun, if straight lines are your thing. Getting lost in the hutongs is another option, still possible, if rather more difficult than it was a few years ago.

Beijing Today's autumn city bicycle tour recommendation is a leisurely dusk ride along Wenjin Jie (文津街), the street that passes the north gate of the Forbidden City and the south gate of Beihai Park. Starting from Xisi (西四) in the west, this route is a history lesson of scenes in a city celebrating its 850th anniversary as China's capital.

## The Most Splendid Streets in Beijing



Northwest corner tower of the Forbidden City

Photos by Zhao Hongyi

for lovers, due both to its picturesque beauty and the relative solitude it offers. Looking south along the moat, one can make out the corner of the Great Hall of the People on Tian'anmen Square.

The small square at the back gate of the Forbidden City is always crowded with tourists. Directly across the street is Jing Shan Park (景山公园). The 23-hectare park was a royal park and zoo during



the Yuan Dynasty. In the early Ming Dynasty, when the Forbidden City was constructed, the area was used for the storage of building materials and coal, thus came to be known Mei Shan (煤山 Coal Hill).

The earth excavated from the moats surrounding the Forbidden City was piled here, turning it into a real hill. The last emperor of the Ming Dynasty, Chongzhen, hanged himself on this hill on March 19, 1644, when peasant rebellion forces entered the capital. The Qing Dynasty used the park as an ancestral temple, hanging portraits of previous emperors there for the descendants to offer sacrifices to.

Though not especially high, Jing Shan offers a spectacular view of the golden roofs of the Forbidden City.

Further eastward are more historical sites, related to somewhat more contemporary events. Past the northeast corner tower of the Forbidden City is Sha Tan (沙滩), or Sand Beach. How it came to be so-named is now something of a mystery, but Sha Tan is famous as the site of a

demonstration held on May 4, 1919. Led by the students from Beijing University, the protesters strongly opposed the agreement reached at the Versailles Treaty after World War I, which continued the special and unequal interests occupied by the Japanese and German empires. The protest led to the overthrow of the cabinet of the Republic of China, and this section of the street subsequently became known as May 4 Road.



On the north side of the street stands a fifty meter wide red building, called Hong

Lou (红楼). The building was once the library of Beijing University. In the September of 1918, Mao Zedong, then a young student, found a job as a library assistant here. Mao said later that it was while working in this library that he learnt about Marxism and the Soviet Revolution from Li Dazhao, the then director of the library. Li was later executed by the government of Bei Yang Jun Fa (North Sea Warlords), the Beijing-based government of the Republic of China.

But today, only the red flag flying at the top of the building gives a clue as to the significance of the library during those revolutionary times.



Running north-south past the east wall of the red building is a street park several hundred meters long. This park, which starts from near Chang'an Avenue and ends at Ping'an Avenue, is called Imperial City Wall Park (皇城根遗址公园) and is an important green belt in downtown Beijing.

Further east is the China National Museum of Fine Arts (中国美术馆). Recently re-opened after a major renovation, the 40-year-old museum has a large collection of Chinese paintings and folk arts.



On the east side across the street along the east wall of the museum is the 500-year-old Longfu Temple (隆福寺). This temple, a branch of the Tibetan Buddhist Lama Temple, was built during the Ming Dynasty for the exclusive use of members of the royal family. Since the beginning of the last century, worshippers' candles and joss sticks have become fewer and the temple has gradually become an open bazaar. Older Beijingers enjoy shopping at the bazaar, partly for the low prices of the goods sold, and partly for the memories it evokes. Youngsters like it because they can find affordable clothes and traditional Beijing dishes here. The three cinemas along the narrow, 600-meter-long street also contribute to its appeal.



Last but not least, two hundred meters east of Longfu Temple is a Soviet-style office building built during the 1950s. This was the first headquarters of the People's Republic of China's department of foreign affairs. In fact, a nearby block used to be the diplomatic ministry of the Qing Dynasty and thus is named Diplomatic Street (外交部街).

## Tuancheng Drill Hall

By Guo Yuandan

The Tuancheng, or round city, and drill hall stand by the southern slopes of the Fragrant Hills in the west of Beijing. Built in 1794, during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, the site consists today of a circular "city" wall, drill hall, west gate and a pavilion housing stone tablets.

The structures were built as a training ground for Ming troops who were to be sent to Sichuan to subdue the troublesome Yi nationality. The Yi lived in heavily fortified stone towers in the mountainous areas of Sichuan and had long frustrated attempts by the Qing to "pacify" them.

Qianlong ordered 67 such towers to be built for training his troops and the exercise proved to be successful. In a subsequent campaign against the Yi, the Qing troops were victorious and Sichuan was brought back into the fold. The returning soldiers were ordered to take up residence at Tuancheng, however today, only one watchtower remains.

The wall of the Round City measures 50 meters from east to west and 40 meters from south to north. It is 11 meters high and five meters wide. An inscription in the handwriting of Emperor Qianlong can be seen above the north and south gate tower.

In the north gate tower, there is a large tablet with the handwriting of Emperor Qianlong on the four sides. It is inscribed in four languages, Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan, describing the military successes of

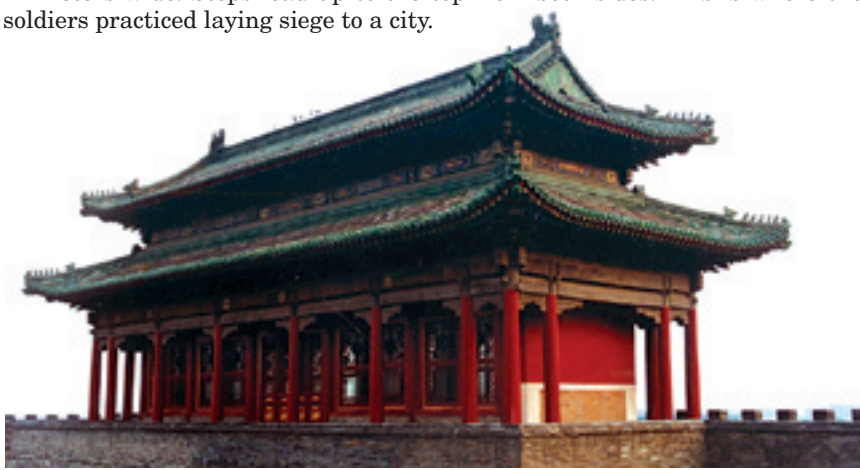
the Qing army.

From the platform on the Drill Hall, Emperor Qianlong reviewed the troops on the drill ground in front.

The west tower has an arched gate built of black stone, 11 meters high and 24 meters wide. Steps lead up to the top from both sides. This is where the soldiers practiced laying siege to a city.



North gate tower



West tower

Photo by Jiang Lei